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E TALLIEN
DIRE DAME DE THERMIDOR





MADAME TALLIEN



Madame Tallien
From an Engraving by W Bond
from a Painting by J J Masquerier

MADAME TALLIEN

NOTRE DAME DE THERMIDOR
FROM THE LAST DAYS OF THE FRENCH
REVOLUTION UNTIL HER DEATH
AS PRINCESS DE CHIMAY IN 1835

BY L. GASTINE

TRANSLATED FROM THE FRENCH
BY J. LEWIS MAY WITH SEVENTEEN
ILLUSTRATIONS



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MADAME TALLIEN

CHAPTER I

The captivity of Theresia Cabarrus in Paris—Legend and History—The spurious inscription in the Carmelite Prison—Lamartine's account of the matter—The story of the correspondence between Tallien and his mistress during the latter's imprisonment in La Petite Force—Improbabilities and impossibilities—The Chancellor Pasquier and Pépin Degruettes—Robespierre's "Cabinet Noir"—Theresia's removal from La Petite Force to the Carmelite Prison—The famous dagger—Robespierre orders Tallien to be watched—Tallien's attempts to cajole the Dictator.

1794

IN the year 1794 there were many timorous folk in Paris who had been so cowed by the Reign of Terror and the cruel distress of the preceding years of revolution that they were living like brute beasts in a sort of voluntary debasement.

To be seen in public reading a newspaper or even carrying one was more than they dared, lest they should render themselves suspect; for had not Fabre d'Eglantine, Camille Desmoulins, Danton and even Hébert, the bloodthirsty sansculotte editor and founder of the terrible *Père Duchêne*, all found their way to the guillotine?

They feared to enter into conversation with other human beings unless they had known them for many years; for how often had it not happened that people had been denounced as reactionaries and hurried off to the scaffold merely for letting fall an ambiguous word or two, or even for maintaining silence in the presence of some chance acquaintance.

These terror-stricken folk knew nothing of public

events save such tidings as had been cried out in the street when hunger forced them to venture out of doors to procure their meagre rations of food or other necessities.

When, after the 9th Thermidor, they entered once more into the general stream of ideas and occupations, their feelings must have been similar to those of the Early Christians when they came forth from the Catacombs wherein they had voluntarily entombed themselves during the religious persecutions.

When they learned that Robespierre was dead, that the Reign of Terror was at an end—of that the Dictator's death seemed a certain pledge—they grew eager to acclaim the party of freedom, and questions regarding the reputed authors of the tyrant's fall were everlastingly upon their lips. "Who is this Tallien that dared to brave the Jacobin leader? Who is the woman that armed him with a dagger to strike a blow for the freedom of France?"

To such eager inquirers it must needs be related how the ex-working-printer, the founder of the *Société fraternelle des deux Sexes* and of the journal known as *L'Ami des Citoyens*, became secretary of the Paris Commune in 1792, and was subsequently elected a deputy; how, when sent on a mission to Bordeaux, he fell in with the lovely Theresia, and, becoming enamoured of her, made her his mistress; how he had been compelled to leave her behind when he came to Paris to defend himself against the charges of "moderantism" which had been launched against him by the emissaries of Robespierre.

It little mattered how it came about that Theresia shortly followed her lover to Paris. The salient fact was that she did follow him, and that it was then that the Dictator gave orders for her imprisonment.

To save his mistress from the scaffold, Tallien, arming

himself with the Spanish dagger which she sent him, overthrew the tyrant.

But nothing was said about the massacres of August 10, 1792, organised by Tallien, because it was unknown what part he had taken in their preparation, and because his guilt in the matter was as yet too indefinitely indicated. A similar silence was maintained, and for the same reasons, concerning the September massacres, though it was he who instigated them and was enriched by them.

The robberies and crimes which he committed at Tours in the course of an earlier mission than that of Bordeaux, and finally his rapacity, his brigandage, his rapines and butcheries in the Gironde, were deeds about which there was no certain knowledge, or which had been completely obliterated by the overthrow of Robespierre. So it was "Glory to Tallien! Long live Tallien!" But what of his Theresia? There we have metal more attractive.

It was alleged that it was she who had urged on Tallien and inspired him with courage to defy the Dictator. Many, therefore, and eager, were the questions that were asked concerning her. Who was she and whence did she come? People were even more anxious to learn about her than about Tallien. To all these questionings the answer was returned that she was the daughter of the famous banker of the Spanish Court, the wealthy François Cabarrus. It was related that as far back as 1788 her incomparable beauty had made her famous, and that it was in that year, when she was fourteen or fifteen years of age, that she wedded a young Counsellor in the Parliament of Louis XVI, named Jean Jacques Devin, Marquis de Fontenay.

At this date she numbered among her admirers the most brilliant of the young nobles who had been smitten with philosophic and humanitarian enthusiasms, such

as Lameth, Le Pelletier, de Saint-Fargeau, de Condorcet, de Noailles, &c. &c.

That she compromised herself to some slight extent with these is proved by the fact that early in 1793 we find her in the Divorce Court, and allowing the *ci-devant* Marquis de Fontenay to quit France alone, while she herself remained behind at Bordeaux with the uncles and brothers she had in that city.

A little before or a little after Tallien's arrival at Bordeaux she had been cast into prison, for what peccadillo we know not. She was to be guillotined without an assigned reason like so many others, when the Representative saw her in her prison, fell in love with her and won her freedom and—her heart.

A romance truly !

But stay: ere long we find the Jacobins accusing her of encouraging Tallien to display his clemency and spare the aristocrats, and the representative hurries off to Paris to confound his accusers.

Theresia could not remain alone at Bordeaux while her lover was in danger of his life in the capital. She therefore set out to rejoin him a few weeks after his departure. The infamous Robespierre immediately had her arrested and imprisoned in La Petite Force, and it was from there that she sent Tallien the dagger wherewith to strike a blow for the freedom of France.

Such was the attractive canvas upon which were woven the endless details which subsequently went to make up the legend so charmingly idealised by Arsène Houssaye under the beautiful and sonorous title of "*Notre Dame de Thermidor*."

But in the case of Theresia as well as in that of Tallien there are some stubborn facts which were unknown in 1794.

On the morrow of Robespierre's fall who knew aught of the early days of this alleged inspirer of the Terrorist ?

Her frivolity, her vanity, her lack of the moral sense, her *aventures galantes* in Spain, Paris and Bordeaux, before the Reign of Terror made itself felt in the Gironde, are matters which were not mentioned at all.

Nor did the people know, when after the 9th Thermidor they were extolling her to the skies, how sordid and scandalous had been the part she had played with Tallien, the people's representative, and how, dissembling the real nature of her acts beneath the cloak of self-sacrifice, she had helped to carry on the ignoble traffic of lives and liberties from which he derived such enormous profits.*

In order to obtain a correct idea of the legend which won for her a considerable amount of transient popularity and laid the foundation of the *souveraineté galante* which she was to enjoy under the Directory, we must return to the story of her captivity and explain how the legend arose.

Arrested in the night at Versailles where she was making ready to fly the country—with or without Guéry, the youthful gallant who had borne her company on her journey from Bordeaux to Paris—Theresia was immediately flung into the prison of La Petite Force, and was, without doubt, terribly alarmed. Ignorant though she may have been of Robespierre's intention of making use of her to confound Tallien, it was impossible for her to deceive herself regarding the danger of her plight. It must have occurred to her that a properly conducted inquiry would supply numerous and overwhelming proofs regarding the traffic in pardons which she had carried on with her lover at Bordeaux, and perhaps also after his departure, with other Terrorists, such as Ysa-beau, Tallien's colleague, and the members of the Military Commission of Bordeaux whose president was the informer Lacombe.

* A million and a half (francs) at least ; possibly even three millions

The question was whether young Jullien, Robespierre's friend and emissary, had collected proofs of this nature. If he had, then nothing could save her from the guillotine. Whose aid could she implore at this juncture? None of the people she had known were in a position to champion her cause. Tallien had ceased to be of any weight with the authorities, and Tallien, long since in possession of her favours, craved for her no more. He had never loved her, for he was too selfish ever to love anybody. Moreover, Tallien knew that she had played him false. So far from taking her part, his inclinations would rather have led him to abandon her, since their liaison at Bordeaux formed one of the complaints that had been levelled against him. From the Terrorist, therefore, she had no grounds for hope.

Such then were Theresia's feelings, such her state of mind behind the bars and bolts of La Petite Force. With this preliminary we will proceed to inquire first into the legend and then into the facts of her captivity.

The legend is charming. Theresia and Tallien adore each other. No sooner had his mate been shut up in her cage than the "Lion Amoureux,"* smothering his roars, went prowling and growling about the prison of his beloved. He exchanged written messages with her, and kept up her courage.

On her side, Theresia urged him to the combat; she it was who armed him against the tyrant Robespierre. Tallien, indeed, waved aloft the dagger which brought liberty and the overthrow of the Dictator, but it was his mistress's little hand, the adorable hand of Our Lady of Help, that really dealt the blow at the murderer of the Girondins.

If we inquire as to the authorship of the story, the answer is that it sprang spontaneously from the circumstances, or rather from such of the circumstances as

* This is the version given in "Notre Dame de Thermidor."

came to the knowledge of the public. In other words, the public, being unacquainted with the realities of the matter, readily conceived the romantic and poetic legend which the only facts known to them suggested to their imagination.

In order to understand the matter, let us reduce the historic fact to the rudimentary data of which the populace at this time were in possession.

Robespierre fell because the Convention, or at all events a majority of that body, refused him a hearing and would not suffer him to offer any defence or explanation. To arrive at this fact, it was only necessary to have been present at the sitting or to have read with care the report of what took place. But all Paris did not take part in the sitting, and the masses never read anything attentively.

But there was one incident that took place during the proceedings that made a much readier and more lasting impression on the mind than the long and involved account of the debate, and that was that Tallien, brandishing his dagger in Robespierre's face, had thrust him away from the tribune and mounted it himself.

For the public, who shun complexities, this deed summed up everything; nothing else counted, and from that day onwards Tallien was the man who brought about the fall of Robespierre.

Amid the many causes that may have produced this effect, and they are too many to examine, there was one which was at once easy to grasp and alluring to the imagination. It was that Tallien was in love with a woman of marvellous beauty whom Robespierre had flung into prison and was about to send to the guillotine. That was the real, the invincible motive. "Ah," murmured the public, "what mighty deeds are wrought for Love's sake." But though it was love that inspired Tallien with the unparalleled audacity to strike at the

tyrant, it was after all his lover who, from the depths of her prison, had overturned the idol.

To the reader who inquires why this sensational account of the affair was not demolished forthwith by the cold weapons of historic fact, the answer is that no one thought of demolishing a fairy tale which gave such universal satisfaction. Tallien and Theresia were therefore left with the responsibility for a deed which continued to provoke discussion and criticism from the 10th Thermidor almost to the time of the Consulate; nay, which provokes them to this very day, for there are still people to be found (when indeed will they cease to be found?) who have reasons of their own for posing as apologists of Robespierre.

As far as the two lovers were concerned, their amazement at the rôle they were popularly supposed to have played by no means prevented them from seizing, and even magnifying to themselves, its somewhat delusive advantages, and they lost no time in confirming the misleading version both in writing and in speech. In a word they vied with each other in embroidering the legend whose various phases and singular development it will now be our task to examine.

Though a certain number of invaluable documents are extant regarding the arrest of Theresia Cabarrus, there are none which throw any light on her imprisonment. There is merely an inscription of a date unquestionably later than her captivity and, whatever its precise date may be, spurious from beginning to end. But it served as a text for two famous panegyrists of La Belle Tallien, Lamartine and Houssaye, and their influence in the world of letters caused it for a long time to be regarded as authoritative. But though to-day no one would deny that it was the purest fiction, we will spare time to examine it.

“O Liberty,” so it ran, “when wilt thou cease to be

but an empty name? For seventeen days we have been imprisoned. They say that we shall go forth to-morrow, but is that not a vain hope?

“CITOYENNE TALLIEN,

“JOSEPHINE DE BEAUHARNAIS,

“DAIGUILLON.”

In a work entitled “The Carmelite Convent during the Terror,” Alexandre Sorel says: “These three names at the foot of an inscription were certainly calculated to command respect, and to avoid all possibility of obliteration, Madame de Seyrecourt had this part of the wall covered with a small glass panel. But it is questionable whether the inscription is really genuine. To begin with, the word for imprisoned (*enfermés*) is in the masculine, and then again there are the signatures.”*

Houssaye mentions another inscription, which took the following form:

“O Liberty! We go forth to-morrow. Yet what is death for one who has descended into Hell?”†

There follow the same signatures as before.

“In the memoirs of the Empress Josephine,” Houssaye goes on to say (though he grants that the memoirs were really written by Georgette Ducrest, who framed them on recollections, letters, and stories of the Empress), “I read the following: ‘One morning the gaoler entered the room where I was sleeping with the Duchesse d’Aiguillon and two other ladies, and told me that he had come to take away my folding-bed in order to give it to another prisoner. ‘What do you mean?’ said Madame d’Aiguillon sharply. ‘Madame de Beauharnais is to have a better one I suppose?’ ‘No, she will not need one,’ he answered with a horrible leer, ‘for they are

* Alexandre Sorel, “Le Couvent des Carmes pendant la Terreur,” pp. 317-325, Paris, Didier, 1863.

† “Notre Dame de Thermidor,” p. 282.

coming to take her away to the Conciergerie, and from there to the scaffold." On hearing these words my companions in misfortune began to weep aloud. I consoled them as best I could but at last, wearied with their never-ending laments, I told them that their grief was without all reason, and that not only should I escape death, but that I should be Queen of France. "Why do you not appoint your Household?" Madame d'Aiguillon wrathfully asked. "Ah, true," I replied, "I had forgotten that. Well then, *ma chère*, I will make you a lady-in-waiting, that I promise you." It is scarcely necessary to point out the gross improbability of this story, which is either a deplorable invention of Georgette's or a ridiculous boast on the part of Josephine. It conflicts alike with the circumstances of the case and with all that we know of Bonaparte's first wife.

"Josephine, it is true, does not mention the name of Madame Tallien, but then, as we know, Napoleon, of whom she always remained in awe, had forbidden her to associate with the fairest of the Thermidoriennes."*

Now why Josephine, when in intimate converse with her friends or writing letters that were not intended for publication, should concern herself with what Napoleon thought is by no means easy to conjecture. The Emperor could scarcely have been so foolish as to forbid Josephine to speak of Theresia when the open and scandalous manner in which his wife and Madame Tallien had conducted themselves at the house of Barras and in Paris generally was notorious throughout the whole of France. We may reasonably inquire why Georgette Ducrest should have been debarred from declaring the truth, or at all events, from refraining from concealing it when it occurred to her to publish Josephine's memoirs so long after the latter had ceased to be Empress.

The author of "*Notre Dame de Thermidor*" was evidently

* "*Notre Dame de Thermidor*," pp. 283-285.

aware of the weakness of the position, for he immediately proceeds to invoke the authority of Lamartine in the following words :

“ It must be borne in mind that many people living at the time heard the story of the three friends as M. de Lamartine tells it. Now the version given by M. de Lamartine, who has depicted the Revolution for us under such a variety of aspects, is as follows :

“ In the Carmelite prison two steps led down into a dark and narrow cell which looked out through a small iron grill on to what had once been the monastery garden. In this cell lay three women who had been cast from fortune’s pinnacle into one and the same prison. Never had the sculptor’s art brought together in a single group three women whose beauty, grace and charm were better calculated to soften the hearts of their gaolers. One of them, Madame d’Aiguillon, bore an illustrious name ; the scaffold was still reeking with the blood of those who were near and dear to her ; the second was Josephine Tascher, the widow of General Beauharnais, who had paid with his life the penalty of the ill-fortune that had pursued him when with the army of the Rhine. The last and loveliest of the three was the youthful Theresia Cabarrus, beloved of Tallien, whose crime was that she had tempered the Representative’s Republican zeal at Bordeaux and had been the means of snatching innumerable victims from their doom. Deaf to her entreaties, the Committee of Public Safety had just torn her from the proconsul, her protector, and cast her into the dungeon where she lay still suspected of influencing the mind of Tallien. Two of these women loved each other tenderly, notwithstanding that they had often been rivals for the admiration of the public and of the Chief of the Army and the Convention. The one was destined for the Throne, whither the youthful love of young Bonaparte was one day to exalt her ;

to the other it was given to overthrow the Republic by inspiring Tallien with the courage to attack the Committees in the person of Robespierre.

"A single mattress, spread out upon the stone floor, in a corner at the far end of the dungeon, served as a bed for the three captives. With the point of their scissors or the teeth of their combs, they scored the plaster of their cell with the initials of those whom they loved or whose aid they implored, as well as with laments for the freedom they had lost."

When we have acknowledged the grace of this passage we have done all that can be demanded of us, and we may then inquire why the poet should have been led to perpetrate an anachronism which demonstrates his partiality. Theresia and Josephine could not have "loved each other tenderly" in the midsummer of 1794, because they were then unknown to each other; they did not meet until after Thermidor.

Nevertheless, Houssaye could not ignore Sorel's monograph which had been published four years before the appearance of his own apologia for Theresia, and immediately after the quotation from Lamartine that we have just reproduced, he added :

"It is very romantic, very poetic, and at the same time, quite true to fact, despite the statement of a recent historian of the Carmelite prison who affirms that Madame Tallien was never incarcerated there."

"The inscription," he says, "which is to be seen in the sword room is on the far wall opposite the window. It is also written in pencil, but the characters are larger. (This is the first of the inscriptions quoted above.) The chief thing that strikes us on a preliminary reading is that the word for imprisoned (*enfermés*) is in the masculine, which is remarkable, considering the sex of the alleged signatories and the education they are supposed to have received. Perhaps, however, it was merely a *lapsus calami*."

“ Now let us take each signature by itself and consider how far it may be regarded as authentic. The first is that of Madame Tallien ; in this instance, there is no room for hesitation ; it is unquestionably apocryphal. The same is true of Madame Tallien as of the Girondins ; neither she nor they ever set foot within the Carmelite prison.” “ That,” comments Houssaye, “ was short and sharp, but let us hear what else the learned chronicler has to say.”

“ Robespierre, not as yet daring to make a direct attack upon Tallien, sought to avenge himself on Madame de Fontenay, and on the 3rd Prairial he gave orders to the Committee of Public Safety to have her arrested. She was immediately conveyed to the prison of La Force and placed in solitary confinement in a cell where her only couch was a little straw, and even that was never changed.

“ No doubt, therefore, can exist in regard to this matter, and we may safely assert that Madame Tallien was never imprisoned in the Carmelite convent. Even if she had been, she would never have signed herself *Citoyenne Tallien*, since her marriage with Tallien did not take place until after her release from prison. Such a piece of thoughtless inconsequence on her part might have cost them both their lives, and certainly Madame Tallien had too much sense to be guilty of it.”

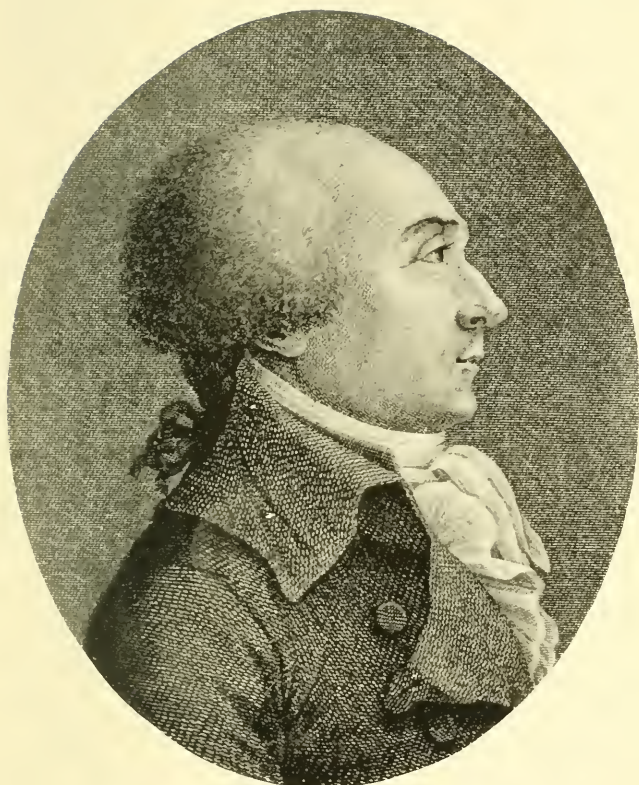
“ To this I would reply that Theresia Cabarrus was already Madame Tallien, in the name of Mercy, Charity and Love, nay in the name of the Law itself. For of what did marriage consist in the Year II of the Republic, when the utmost that men did was to acknowledge the existence of a Supreme Being ? Madame Tallien had sought a divorce at Bordeaux in order to marry Tallien. Did not the Proconsul of Bordeaux say to Robespierre ‘ *Citoyenne Fontenay is my wife* ’ ? * Therefore, right,

* This is incorrect ; Tallien never made such a statement to Robespierre. Moreover, his divorce proceedings had begun before his journey to Bordeaux.

duty and policy, all alike combined to bring her to take a name which was calculated to tell in her favour before the Revolutionary Tribunal.* Next, our historian affirms that the name of Madame de Fontenay is not to be found on the Carmelite prison register. But how many were there who passed within its walls and left us no trace of their identity, as they trod the way to death! How innumerable are the omissions and mistaken entries! But what living testimony and Madame Tallien's own letters show to be historical fact, is that she was first cast into one prison and then into another; that she went from La Force to the Carmelites and then back again to La Force."

Alas, these rejoinders, in which some irritation is discernible, do not shake Sorel's position in the smallest degree. The latter indeed might have gone a good deal further. He might, for example, have mentioned that the spelling of the last name, Daiguillon, is still more remarkable than the particularly unfortunate masculine of *enfermés*. He might have recorded that the handwriting of the inscription and that of the three names are not identical, a circumstance which logically suggests the inference that the three names were inscribed at different dates. Moreover, not only is the inscription written in the masculine, but the very idea it conveys is exclusively characteristic of a man and not of a woman. It is the reflection of a Republican who had been disillusioned in regard to the Revolution. "O Liberty!" Such was the cry. Madame d'Aiguillon would never have lamented over the image of Freedom in fetters, nor would Beauharnais' widow, nor yet Theresia, even if she had not been in solitary confinement in La Petite Force and so debarred from recording her thoughts on the walls

* This is a huge mistake. In the atmosphere of suspicion which enveloped Tallien, and of which he had certainly informed his mistress, the name would have decided her guilt.



JACQUES RENÉ HÉBERT

From a drawing by F. Bonneville engraved by E. Boivin

of the Carmelite prison. Finally, Robespierre, who had no possible motive for sending Theresia from La Petite Force to the Carmelites and from the Carmelites back again to La Petite Force, would have taken good care not to expose his victim to the chance of going astray in the course of such unnecessary journeys.

That the Princesse de Chimay herself adopted and maintained this untenable version of the story need cause us no surprise, for the extraordinary imaginative flights of the play called "Robespierre" have also received her *imprimatur*.

Apart from the legend of the three captives of the Carmelite prison, the only accounts we possess of Theresia's incarceration are those of her two daughters, Madame du Hallay and Madame Brunetière.

Though their stories are conspicuously lacking in verisimilitude, they must be quoted and analysed, for; inasmuch as they were really inspired by La Belle Tallien after she had become Madame de Chimay, they form an essential part of her life-story.

"Meanwhile Theresia Cabarrus was still in solitary confinement at La Force." That is to say, since her arrest. Houssaye says no word as yet regarding the Carmelite prison, nor does he assign any date to the pretty tale that he is about to relate. It would have sorely taxed his ingenuity to do so.

"At last," he tells us, "as though by a miracle; she was granted permission to go down into the courtyard at the hour when the prisoners used sadly to behold the last rays of daylight fading from their eyes. The shadows of night were already gathering fast. Vainly the young woman asked to whom she owed this favour. The turnkey was silent as the tomb.

"The very first evening, as she was enjoying the air that was blowing cool and fresh after a shower of rain, a stone fell at her feet. She was of too romantic a

disposition not to recognise in this something more than mere coincidence. She picked up the stone and found a note attached to it, a note consisting of two lines in an unknown hand. She would willingly have given two years of her life to read those two lines, but although the moon was bright she could not decipher them, she was obliged to wait for the light of day.

“ She gazed at the roofs of the surrounding houses to see whence the token could have fallen, for she had thought herself forsaken by all, even by Tallien.* She beheld nothing save closed and silent casements ; not a gleam shone from any of those gables upon which she might gaze as on the beacon-star of her deliverance. She listened, but in the vague murmur that reached her from without, no voice found its way to her heart. That little stone which came perhaps to bring her tidings of good cheer had doubtless been thrown from afar. Or was it, she asked herself, but the untimely declaration of some unhappy prisoner fain to forget the prospect of coming death in a dream of love.

“ Madame de Fontenay was at length compelled to return to her cell, for the dark chamber to which she had been transferred some days since was none the less a cell, only the straw was cleaner and the mice did not display quite so much familiarity as in her previous quarters.

“ As soon as day broke, she sat up on her pallet-bed and held the note, the thoughts of which had kept disturbing her slumbers, close to the bars of the grating. Though it was written in imitation of printed characters she joyfully recognised Tallien’s hand. ‘ I am watching over you,’ the missive ran ; ‘ every night at nine o’clock you will go into the courtyard : I shall be near you.’

* Could a woman who was so beautiful and so seemingly ardently beloved imagine herself forsaken ? In dictating this passage the *Princesse de Chimay* tacitly acknowledges that at this time Tallien no longer loved her.

“Those who are of a romantic turn of mind will not need to be told of the manifold emotions that thronged the captive’s bosom as she read these words, of her impatience, her longings, her questionings, her fears.

“The whole daylong—and the day seemed an eternity—she was in a fever of anxiety. When the gaoler brought her morning meal of boiled beans and black bread she plied him with questions, but his only answer was to place his finger on his lips. Nevertheless he told her that, as an additional favour, she was to be allowed to take her dinner with certain other prisoners, but he did not tell her that between each prisoner would be stationed a blue-coated warder, so that the unhappy women could scarce exchange a single meaning glance or casual word in the gendarmes’ presence.

“Evening came. At the same hour as before, Madame de Fontenay was conducted into the courtyard and, as before, she heard a stone drop at her feet.

“Although Madame de Fontenay’s recollection of those days always remained very vivid, she only remembered the wording of the first message. For eight days in succession Tallien wrote her a few lines to comfort her. But after those eight golden days of hope, her visits to the courtyard were suddenly suspended. Robespierre’s police had seen too much. Darkness itself was not proof against their prying eyes. Vainly did Theresia Cabarrus pour forth promises and tears : her gaoler turned a deaf ear to all her entreaties.

“Not until the 10th Thermidor did the ci-devant Marquise de Fontenay learn from Tallien himself that he had hired a garret close at hand, whither he betook himself night after night to give vent to his feelings—indignation and love and grief. Thence it was that he sped those stones that spoke so eloquently of his devotion; bidding her nightly for a whole week not to abandon hope.

“How had Tallien been able to get into communication

with the gaoler, and how had these mysterious messages arrived? It was Tallien's mother who had melted the harshness of the man. Disguising herself, she had come to plead for the prisoner, saying that Citoyenne Fontenay suffered from disease of the heart and would die unless she could breathe the open air. The gaoler's wife was moved to compassion, but after a week of kindness, the gaoler himself was denounced, and Theresia Cabarrus was removed to the Carmelite prison because Robespierre considered that Tallien dwelt in too close proximity to La Force."

Arsène Houssaye informs us that the narrative is not his but Madame du Hallay's,* "who writes delightfully." So indeed it would appear. We might imagine we were reading a *feuilleton* in a popular newspaper.

But Madame du Hallay—or rather Theresia, for we must not forget that it is La Belle Tallien, now Princesse de Chimay, who supplies Madame du Hallay with her materials—fully recognises the risk which she had made her gaoler run in assigning him so compromising a part, since she adds that, after allowing her for the space of a week to take these nocturnal walks and gather up Tallien's missives, this gaoler, having been denounced by Robespierre's spies, barred the exit from the cell and turned a deaf ear to all further appeals. Unfortunately the explanation she gives of the gaoler's complaisance is inadmissible. The instructions, *written throughout in Robespierre's own hand*, are explicit: they lay down that Theresia Cabarrus Fontenay is to be kept in solitary confinement, and authorise no promenades that would allow her to communicate with persons outside the prison. If the gaoler was won over (or bribed) by Tallien's mother, and if Robespierre's spies informed their master that he had been tampered with and had betrayed his trust,

* Madame du Hallay, one of the daughters of La Belle Tallien by her third husband, the Comte de Caraman, Prince de Chimay.

nothing could have saved him from the guillotine. Never a day went by but some unhappy Republican, infinitely less guilty than this gaoler, was sent to the scaffold by Robespierre and the Committee of Public Safety.

The story of the gaoler whose compassion went unpunished is therefore a fiction invented by Theresia to explain her alleged removal to the Carmelite prison, and particularly her supposed correspondence with Tallien, the object of which will be apparent later. Either it is a pure fabrication or else Robespierre's police had endeavoured to lay a trap for her. She did not understand it, any more than Tallien, until after her release, when she made use of the incident to lend verisimilitude to the story of her correspondence with her lover.

The tale of Tallien throwing stones from a neighbouring garret—stones to which were attached messages from the “*Lion Amoureux*”—is impossible, not only because such a correspondence would have been too dangerous for the craven-hearted Conventional, but because it would have been a physical impossibility for him to have reached the courtyard into which Theresia affirms that her gaoler conducted her.*

* It is only necessary to examine any plan of the Paris of those days, for example, the popular plan divided into 48 sections and published by Esnauts and Rapilly in 1793, to see that it would have been impossible to throw a stone into the courtyards of either La Force or La Petite Force from the roofs of any of the surrounding buildings. Those two prisons, or rather the Hôtel of the Duc de la Force, are surrounded by four streets. First take the rue du Roi-de-Sicile: the buildings facing the prison on this side are those of Saint Louis, where Tallien could have procured no lodging. Secondly, there was the rue Culture-Sainte-Catherine, where the buildings which belonged to the market of Sainte-Catherine are lower than the prison, and where it would have been equally impossible for Tallien to hire a room. Thirdly, there was the rue Sainte-Catherine, but there the buildings belong to the Filles-Bleues, so that there too no attic could have been had on hire. Lastly, there was the rue Pavée-au-Maraais, the only possible place in which Tallien could have taken up a position. But there again the buildings were lower than the Hôtel de la Force, while on all sides the prison buildings extended too far back for it to have been possible to throw a stone into one of the inner courts.

On the other hand, nothing would have been easier than for a man, playing the part of Tallien, to have thrown down, from the roof of the prison, messages written in the form of printed characters (so as to disguise the writing) in order to induce her to send replies that would have incriminated both Tallien and herself. In this case the gaoler might well have pretended for a week to shut his eyes to what was going on, since the whole thing would have been a move on the part of the police. At length, when a week had passed, the trick was discontinued, either because it had failed to elicit the anticipated revelations, or because it was considered to be no longer necessary.

Such a proceeding would have been thoroughly in keeping with the methods of the Terrorist Police, who used to introduce alleged suspects into the gaols with the express purpose of obtaining, or, if necessary, of fabricating, evidence against the real prisoners in order to find a pretext for bringing them to the scaffold.*

* The following is the account which the Chancellor Pasquier gives of the matter in his Memoirs :—"To hurry matters on, there had latterly been a great deal of talk about systematic conspiracies against the Republic which, it was said, were being carried on within the prisons. What lent an additional horror, if such were possible, to this newly discovered scheme, was the method of putting it into operation. In all the larger prisons there were a certain number of wretches who to all appearance were sharing the bondage of the other prisoners, but who were really there to draw up the lists and preside over the selection of the victims. Several of them had at length been found out and, incredible though it may seem, had not been done to death by those in whose midst they performed their execrable task. Nay, they were even treated with respect and fawned upon. No sooner had I passed through the grille in company with the gaoler who was conducting me to my cell, than I encountered Monsieur de Montrou who had already attracted attention by reason of some rather scandalous successes, and whose subsequent adventures made such a stir in the world. Coming up to me, but without appearing to be looking at me, he whispered in my ear the following salutary advice : ' Talk to no one here with whom you are not well acquainted.'

"When Madame Pasquier and I came to the miserable cell which had been appointed for us, and which had been vacated by the two victims of the previous day, we were speedily surrounded by our kinsfolk and certain friends who hastened to offer us such services as it was

That it would be by no means far-fetched to credit the police with such a stratagem is confirmed by Pasquier's statement. But it is more likely that the gaoler's story as narrated by the Princesse de Chimay was a pure fabrication, conceived with the purpose of accounting for the letters subsequently concocted by Tallien and Theresia, whose idea it was to claim for themselves the heroic part in the legend of the Ninth of Thermidor.

We shall shortly see, when we come to inquire into the Septembriseur's behaviour during his mistress's incarceration, that he took particularly good care not to go pacing up and down outside her prison or to attempt to hold the slightest communication with her. It would have been madness on his part not to have foreseen that, since she was kept in solitary confinement, a strict watch would be maintained on all communications sent and received by her. That such a scrutiny was in fact carried out is evidenced by the seizure of the letters sent to her, not indeed by Tallien, but by others, letters which came from the provinces.

in their power to render. We were deriving as much comfort as in our plight was possible from these marks of sympathy and friendship, when one of my brothers-in-law who was looking out of the window suddenly exclaimed: 'Ah, there is Pépin Dégrouettes beginning his round. We shall have to put in an appearance; come along with us.' On my enquiring what this meant, they told me that he was the chief of those ruffians who carried on the abominable work of which I have made mention, and who in the prison slang were distinguished by the name of 'moutons' (sheep). Every day, when dinner was over, he used thus to make a tour of the courtyard. It was his way of reviewing, so to speak, the herd whose members he was to send one after another to be butchered. Woe to the prisoner who kept in the background and endeavoured to avoid notice. His fate was sealed. Many a brave soul was sent to his doom for being a few minutes behindhand in coming to the courtyard to show himself. Thus to recognise his powers seemed to be the usual way of imploring his pity. We fulfilled this formality, and the memory of the scene will never fade from my mind. I can see him even now, no more than four-feet-seven or eight inches in height, hump-backed, misshapen and bandy-legged, his hair as red as Judas's. A group of prisoners surrounded him, and there were a few who walked backwards before him endeavouring to win the favour of a glance." — "*Mémoires du Chancelier Pasquier*," pp. 107-9.

The following passage excerpted from the papers of the Committee of Public Safety (bureau de la surveillance administrative, rapport du 5 Messidor, an II, 24 juin 1794) is cited by Charles Nauroy in *Le Curieux* :

"The Revolutionary Committee of the Section de la Fraternité transmits two further letters addressed to the Citoyenne Cabarrus, the divorced wife of Devins (*sic*).

"The first, of no importance, is dated from Bordeaux ; the second, which bears a similar postmark, is signed 'Manoury.' The latter has gone to Rouen.

"NOTE BY ROBESPIERRE. *State exactly what those letters contain, and endeavour to discover the whereabouts of Manoury.*

"The Revolutionary Committee sends ten other letters forwarded to the Citoyenne Cabarrus, Devins' divorced wife. They contain nothing to excite suspicion, their subject-matter being entirely of an amatory character.

"IN ROBESPIERRE'S HANDWRITING. *All the papers concerning la Cabarrus must be collected together.*"

It is clear therefore that all the letters sent to Theresia were intercepted, forwarded to the Committee of Public Safety and divulged to Robespierre, who added notes in his own handwriting, thus proving the close attention he paid to letters even so trivial as these, which treated of nothing but love-making from beginning to end. This being the case there is, *a fortiori*, all the more reason to suppose that he would have intercepted letters passing between Tallien and Theresia ; nor is it likely that a gaoler would have dared to connive at such a correspondence—unless it were a trap, that is to say, unless the letters supposed to have been sent by Tallien did not come from him at all. If Tallien had been so mad as to send the merest word to his mistress, it would have been immediately forwarded to Robespierre, and have found a place—and no insignificant one—in the memoranda quoted above.

Now for a closer glance at this alleged correspondence. The Princesse de Chimay talks about having received messages every day for a week. It only suits her convenience to give us one of them, and that one, as ill-luck will have it, is just as improbable as the story about the gaoler. Its meaning is plainly seen from the words : " You will go into the courtyard every evening at nine o'clock ; I shall be near you," which, being interpreted, is " I know you will go into the courtyard at nine o'clock; for it is through my intervention that this qualified nocturnal freedom is permitted you." The words " I shall be near you " are inserted to explain the stone-borne messages and to confirm the declaration " I am watching over you."

That would have been enough to bring both Tallien and gaoler to the guillotine if the correspondence had been seized. Was the Conventional therefore (this is the de Chimay version remember) confident that his missives ran no such risk ?

Then again, how comes it that Tallien always employs the second person plural "*veille sur vous . . . vous irez*" instead of the familiar *toi* and *tu* ? Such aristocratic turns of speech do not consort with his nature, his education, or the fashion of the day.*

How is it that this message from the " *Lion Amoureux* " is devoid not only of all words of endearment, but of the simplest affectionate phrase ? Why no allusion to the discretion, the prudence, which Theresia would be compelled to observe if she was to avoid compromising either or both of them in her letters, her demeanour, and her most trivial gestures ? The reason was that when the Princesse de Chimay dictated her story to Madame du Hallay, she considered it related to deeds which had been

* That the lovers used the familiar pronouns (*se tutoyaient*) is proved by a passage quoted by A. Houssaye himself à propos of the quarrels between Tallien and Theresia when the latter was beginning to sever her relations with the former in order to attach herself to Barras.

enacted far too long ago for her hearers, whom she regarded as beneath her in intelligence, to be anything but completely ignorant of the events narrated. We shall have something more to say presently about the letters that were alleged to have been exchanged by Theresia and Tallien. At this point we will make a digression to relate the following story, which, in point of time, comes between the eight imaginary letters from Tallien and the supposed removal of his mistress from La Petite Force to the Carmelite prison and from the latter back again to La Petite Force.

Here is a charming legend of Notre Dame de Thermidor which Theresia Cabarrus used to relate in her retirement at Chimay. The story is to be found in print in the *Souvenirs of King William's Court*, and I now translate it as follows :

“ It chanced one day, when Madame Tallien, in company with several fellow captives, was being transferred from one prison to another, that the sort of tumbril in which she and the rest were huddled together was brought to a standstill near the quay in one of those narrow crooked by-ways so common in the Paris of those days, and its wheels became locked with those of another cart which was bearing the condemned on their way to the guillotine. On this car of death stood a young girl of eighteen, fair as an angel, lovely as a heroine of romance, a rosebud between her lips, and her hands and arms pinioned behind her. She turned her gaze on Madame Tallien, and her eyes were eloquent of all the poetry of resignation. Raising her great blue orbs to Heaven, she seemed to be pointing out the path of paradise to her dark-eyed sister in misfortune. Though no word was uttered, some secret bond of sympathy was established between them in their hapless plight ; they read each other's inmost soul, their looks exchanged sublime and solemn mysteries in the swift and sudden revelation

of their love. Sorrow, hope, memory, all were summed up in the silent eloquence of these two adorable creatures. They met to love, they loved and went their several ways never to behold each other again. The fatal tumbrils were set in motion, a farewell glance sped from the girl's seraphic eyes and bathed Theresia in its limpid radiance. As the tumbril of death passed on, the doomed girl twirled the rosebud in her lips and blew it with all her force towards Theresia Cabarrus. The latter stretched forth her arms in wistful yearning towards the hapless child, but all in vain—death brooked no delay. The executioner was too punctilious to keep his victims waiting. Thus the guillotine gathered to itself the young girl's life, and Madame Tallien bore with her a rose and a sweet memory."

The "charming legend" is certainly not altogether devoid of quaintness. It is not every one who could so gracefully and unerringly perform the trick of the flying rosebud.

Il ne fait pas ce tour qui veut.

Now let us turn to the famous letters of the Thermidorian legend, since they also have to do with Theresia's captivity.

According to her own story the fair prisoner was brought from the Carmelite prison to La Petite Force, and yet she dates her correspondence from La Force. Why La Force and not La Petite Force it is impossible to say; that however is not a detail of first-rate importance. Theresia might easily have been guilty of a trifling inaccuracy of that sort. But, as we shall see, these letters were preceded by a despatch of a different nature. "Tallien believed that Theresia Cabarrus was still at the Carmelite prison when one morning—it was the 4th Thermidor—he mysteriously found himself the recipient of a dagger. No word accompanied it. None knew who

had brought it thither. Not a soul had been seen. There the weapon was, however, on the table before his very eyes. He had hardly been out half an hour.

"He recognised the dagger, a delicate little blade of Spanish make that he had seen many a time in the hands of Theresia Cabarrus. 'Twas a command, that was certain, a command that spoke volumes.

"That same day he fell in with Robespierre, who was chatting with David before the meeting of the Commune.

"Then we are given a conversation between Robespierre, David and Tallien, who it appears besought the Dictator to show his mercy to Theresia.

"Alas, the Incorruptible was inflexible. Tallien had expended his eloquence in vain. At last, failing to secure his mistress's release, he went off in a fury.

"As soon as he had turned the corner of the street, he drew Theresia's dagger from his breast and flashed it in the sunlight as though to nerve himself for the desperate business that confronted him. 'This,' he cried passionately, 'will be my final argument,' and looking about him to make sure he was alone he raised the blade to his lips and kissed it."

We ask in vain how it came about that Theresia was so conveniently possessed of this Spanish dagger in her prison and how she contrived to send it in such wondrous wise to Tallien. Be that as it may, Tallien brandished aloft a dagger at the Convention, and it would be rank blasphemy to deny that this dagger belonged to Theresia and that she had sent it to him from her cell. Since the two lovers agree to have it so, no one must gainsay it.*

But we have not yet finished with the dagger. It has another part to play in the sequel to a nocturnal meeting between Barras, Robespierre, Fréron, Robespierre the

* The "Intermédiaire des Chercheurs et des Curieux" of the 20th December, 1898, published a document stating that she was stripped and searched at La Petite Force before eight men. It is difficult to see how they could have left her with the dagger.

younger, Collot d'Herbois, Javogne and Tallien. Here too Tallien was still holding forth on the subject of clemency. He even lost his temper with Robespierre, demanding the release of the Citoyenne Fontenay. The Tyrant would not relinquish his prey. Then Tallien once more kissed his lover's dagger, but not in the sunlight this time. The night, we are told, was dark. "Like a raging lion he rushed to where the guillotine stood; twenty paces away, to invoke Danton's avenging shade; kissing a dagger the while, the dagger of Madame de Fontenay."

This, according to the Princesse de Chimay, occurred during the night of the 7th to 8th Thermidor. And on the 7th, Theresia in the course of the day sent her lover the famous incendiary letter. But how? Ah, 'twere heresy to inquire. The mere superscription is enough to amaze one. "From La Force, 7th Thermidor. The Citoyenne Fontenay to the Citoyen Tallien, rue de la Perle 17." Why *Citoyenne Fontenay*, we may ask, when she had been divorced? The Princess's memory must have been getting hazy.

"The Administrateur de Police," so the letter ran, "has just left. He came to inform me that I am to be brought up for trial, that is to say for execution, to-morrow. Far different was the dream I dreamed last night. Robespierre was no more, the prison gates were flung wide . . . alas, thanks to your signal cowardice there will soon be no one left in France capable of bringing such a dream to pass."

Let us analyse this production. Here we have a letter which, to begin with, could never have been delivered, and if it had been delivered, might easily have meant death to sender and recipient alike. It was a point-blank command to kill Robespierre. Of course something of the sort was necessary to explain the legend of whose spontaneous birth on the morrow of the

9th Thermidor we have already made mention. And by way of giving emphasis to the command, the most grievous insult—most grievous because it was true—was offered to Tallien. “Your signal cowardice,” she said.

After the 9th Thermidor, when Tallien was credited with having performed prodigies of valour, it was easy enough for Theresia to write him about his signal cowardice without risk of offending him. Would she have ventured on such a quip on the 7th Thermidor when, a prisoner within an ace of the scaffold, she was making her final appeal for mercy? Such a “yarn” would only go down with the crowd blind to everything except the legend itself; and the legend said that Tallien had been roused to action by his mistress. When you want to stimulate a horse or a bull, the usual thing is to hit it. The “signal cowardice” was well conceived to suit the popular imagination.

Nevertheless, even for a public so little inclined to be critical, the style in which their correspondence was couched betrayed one singular defect. Tallien, who was called a coward in the second person plural, himself replied in the same formal tone. “Be as prudent, you, as I am brave: keep a cool head whatever you do.”

So the amorous lion and his passionate mate bite and tear each other till the blood flows. Queer caresses to be sure.

Happily a certain distance divided Tallien and Theresia, or thy might perchance have driven home their last fond words with harder blows.

The tale of these letters is really too clumsy a piece of deception to detain us any longer. We will now pass on to consider what legend and history have to tell us of Tallien’s doings between the 12th Prairial (June 1) and the 9th Thermidor (July 27).

It is perfectly clear that Tallien would not have sent for Theresia to join him in Paris at the very moment when his association with the fair ci-devant was one of the principal articles in the indictment brought against him in connection with his Bordeaux mission.

Expelled from the Gironde, Theresia was enticed to the capital by the wiles of the secret police. Taschereau, Desmousseau and Tallien knew practically nothing of her coming. Once she was there, however, her lover could not well avoid seeing her. They must have met, but not very often, between the 14th, 15th or 16th and the 28th or 29th May, and on these occasions Tallien certainly impressed upon her the necessity of observing the utmost caution.

Tallien realised full well that if Theresia was pleased to let her tongue wag too inconsiderately, she knew more than enough to bring him to the guillotine, and he would certainly have spared himself no effort, by impressing on her the danger which beset them, to persuade her to set a ward upon her tongue.

There was not a grain of chivalry in Tallien's composition, and he certainly would not have appealed to Theresia's finer instincts to prevail on her to be discreet. He took a more practical and effective course than that, and directed his energies towards convincing her that, if he were condemned, her own execution would follow as a natural and inevitable consequence. There were, indeed, innumerable examples of women far less deeply involved than she being brought to the scaffold, and Theresia grew alarmed. Tallien's object was easily attained, and, long before her arrest, Theresia's lips were effectually sealed. So much is clearly demonstrated by General Boulanger's report of her examination, which contains nothing but replies of a trivial or misleading nature.

If Theresia had let the cat out of the bag, if she had made mention of other names than Brival, Monestier, Frescheville, Sagon, Félix Lepeletier and people of that description, Boulanger would have assuredly put it on record. But we hear nothing of Lacombe, Rey and the other sansculottes of Bordeaux; not a word of the suspects and aristocrats with whom she was acquainted in the Gironde, and, most important of all, not a word of Tallien, whose protection and testimony she would infallibly have invoked had not her lips been closed.

At the time those conversations were in progress Tallien had no inkling of his mistress's coming arrest, though we may reasonably infer that he learnt of it at the last moment from the warrant for Jean Guéry's apprehension which he signed on May 31. When we consider that his name at the foot of the order for Theresia's imprisonment would have been a most powerful incentive for her to tell all she knew, we may justly assume that he was asked to sign in her case as he was in Guéry's. But Tallien—who had a wholesome horror of putting his name to compromising papers—was acute enough to recognise the snare and avoid it, and, though he signed Guéry's warrant, he no doubt refused to sign his mistress's. To give orders for her imprisonment would have been to accuse her and to accuse himself, and he was not sufficiently frenzied a lover to commit such a foolish act in a fit of jealous anger. His selfishness, which his adversaries had left out of the account, checkmated the move which had been based on considerations of his passion and his *amour propre*.

All this is of course merely hypothetical since we are reduced to conjecture. Conjecture however is not only permissible but profitable when it fits in with a body of corroborative evidence. We shall proceed to explain the bases of our inferences after having eliminated

by a process of logical deduction the various false or faulty versions which have been circulated with the express design of obscuring the history of Theresia Cabarrus.

Concerning Tallien's existence from the 12th Prairial (May 31) to the 9th Thermidor, the chroniclers are comparatively silent. They quote police reports extracted from unpublished papers found at the dwellings of Robespierre, Saint Just and others and suppressed or omitted by Courtois (and published in 1828 by Baudoin frères), reports showing that at the beginning of Messidor (towards the end of June 1794) Robespierre was commencing to feel uneasy and to recognise that he had formidable adversaries in Bourdon de l'Oise Thuriot, Fouché, Tallien, Legendre and others, since he ordered his agents to keep the strictest watch on their most trifling movements.

As regards one of his reputed *sbirri* named Guérin, Monsieur E. Hamel in his History of Robespierre has demonstrated in the most convincing fashion that Guérin was not employed by Robespierre but by the Committee of Public Safety. While allowing that Monsieur Hamel has made good his case, we may remark that his is a distinction without a difference, for the Committee of Public Safety was then Robespierre's abject slave, and acted only for him and through him. Nor by allowing that Guérin may have been an exception do we weaken the imputation of espionage carried on by Robespierre through other agents. His correspondence alone affords ample evidence that the shadowing of his adversaries was a device habitually resorted to by the Dictator.

The police reports to which reference has been made have been relegated to the appendix, their interest being merely of the picturesque order; but the reader whose curiosity leads him to refer to them will not fail to notice how excessively uneasy Tallien was and how, while striv-

ing to dissemble his anxiety by affecting a sort of leisurely unconcern, he employed his agent Rambouillet, and most probably others besides, to exercise a kind of counter espionage and warn him of the meshes in which he knew his enemies were endeavouring to entangle him. These prudent, not to say nervous, measures are in striking contrast to the tales about Tallien's pacing up and down every day outside the prison of La Force.

The fact that Tallien was an arrant coward makes it sufficiently certain that he would not have displayed any eagerness in demanding his mistress's release. He was at this time living in the rue de la Perle with his parents; doubtless because he was anxious to be taken for a poor man and because he knew that the police, who were watching him, were perfectly well aware that he was never to be found in the neighbourhood of La Force. He would rather have gone to Montrouge than suffer himself to be suspected of bestirring himself in the slightest degree on Theresia's behalf.

Turquan, who avails himself of anything that suits him in the story (as he is entitled and indeed bound to do) does not so much as mention the narratives so dramatically recounted by Houssaye. He draws a much truer picture of Tallien when he presents him to our eyes as a contemptible fellow quite ready to make Robespierre a present of his mistress's head if by so doing he could manage to save his own. Such an estimate of the man has nothing improbable about it, whereas the unselfish devotion with which he is credited in the legendary version is absolutely inconsistent with all we know of him. So far is the author of the *Citoyenne Tallien* from crediting Theresia's lover with any heroic qualities that he believes his various appeals to Robespierre were made for the advancement of no one's cause but his own, and in support of this view he quotes the following remarks of Barras :

"Robespierre had become, as it were, a judge to whom every man against whom any sort of accusation was brought, considered it necessary to refer his case. A man deemed himself safe as soon as Robespierre had given him absolution." *

That is perfectly correct, as we shall shortly prove by further evidence.

Tallien; violently attacked by Robespierre in a speech delivered on the 24th Prairial, twelve days after Theresia's arrest, wrote him next day a letter couched in the most abjectly servile terms. "Imposture backed up by crime . . ." says he. "These unjust and terrible words of yours are still ringing in my ears. I am a straightforward man, and I will tell you frankly how the matter stands."

It is abundantly clear that a man who was mean enough to cringe and crawl before Robespierre was incapable of dealing him aught but a blow from behind, and, in point of fact, the events of the 9th Thermidor did amount to nothing but a traitorous stab in the back, for Tallien's apparent initiative would have been but a piece of grotesque and fatal folly, as far as he was concerned, had he not been assured beforehand that the majority of the National Assembly were already eager for the Dictator's overthrow.

The Septembriseur did the attitudinising, he it was who brandished the dagger, and thus it appeared as though he alone had dared to confront the Dictator, for whose downfall he consequently gained the credit. But he would never have exhibited a hundredth part of his audacity had he not felt himself supported by a great body of Terrorists no less compromised than he, had he not been practically driven and goaded to the deed. His alleged initiative on the 9th Thermidor was but the mask of a plot engineered by his accomplices.

* Barras, "Mémoires," vol. i, p. 146.

To this plot the downfall of Maximilian Robespierre is solely due, and its most active ringleader was Fouché.*

* In that delightful work "The Ninth of Thermidor" (Michaud, Paris), Messrs. Albert Savine and François Bournand bring out once more into strong relief the importance of this Thermidorian plot, and show that Tallien was really nothing more than a tool in the hands of Fouché, the moving spirit of the whole affair.

CHAPTER II

Tallien's attitude towards Robespierre prior to the Fouché conspiracy—Visits paid to Robespierre by Terrorist delegates anxious to clear themselves—Robespierre's position and the fear which he inspired—The plot against Robespierre and Tallien's part in it—The closing days of the conspiracy.

FOR a variety of causes, chiefly political in character, we have been nourished upon such erroneous traditions concerning the 18th century, the Revolution and the personages who came into the world between the years 1700 and 1830, that it behoves us to seek elsewhere than in the writings of the professed historians if we would obtain a just conception of the general course of events, and a due appreciation of the men who flourished during the period with which we propose to deal.

Their contemporaries had the advantage of observing at first hand the men of whom they speak, and if their judgments are sometimes apt to be distorted by personal bias, they are nevertheless mutually corrective one of another.

With regard to Maximilian Robespierre, who now begins to play a foremost part in the history of Theresia Cabarrus, the chroniclers are all of one unanimous opinion.

Weighing the merits of the actors in the Revolution—plentifully exaggerated during the First Empire—the Duchesse d'Abrantès in her "History of the Paris Salons,"* speaks of the famous Dictator as follows:

* "Histoire des Salons de Paris," by the Duchesse d'Abrantès, p. 215.

Charles Lacretelle endorses this statement "I cannot tell," he

“ Robespierre in himself possessed no superiority over his colleagues, only he had the power of ruling them and of taking the initiative. I was intimately acquainted with some people at Arras who had known him as a boy, and they used to tell me that what exasperated him most was his sense of physical inferiority to his fellows; for he had a sallow complexion and his features were cast in ignoble mould. His veins were of a greenish tinge which, added to something pantherlike in his expression; gave him a distinctly repulsive appearance. Some people used to assert that he had an intelligent smile, but his thin bloodless lips expressed nothing but a sort of spiteful sneer suggestive of envy or mockery. His knowledge was very superficial and was limited to a few ideas picked up from books he had read. For the rest he was profoundly ambitious and a thorough hypocrite.”*

With this sketch, the vigour of which reflects the vivid manner in which the Duchess had been impressed by her model, we may compare the following more elaborate presentment from the pen of Barras. Like his colleague Tallien, Barras was not wholly free from reproach. The excesses he had committed at Tours were of the same order as those of which the Septembriseur had himself been guilty. Robespierre despised and detested him as much as he despised and detested Tallien, but he was less jealous of him because he did not possess, as Tallien did, the ear of the Paris sansculottes, and he feared him less than he feared Theresia’s lover because he was less of a coward and less of a traitor.

writes, “how horrified I felt when I heard those women, since called *tricoteuses*, approving Robespierre’s homicidal doctrines, listening with delight to his harsh voice and gazing lingeringly on his unlovely features, the very incarnation of envy.”—Ch. Lacretelle, “Dix années d’épreuves,” p. 29.

* Madame Roland in her Memoirs also states that Robespierre had few ideas of his own, but that he knew how to listen and appropriate ideas which he heard others expounding, repeating them afterwards as his own.

The portrait which Barras gives us is valuable for this reason: it depicts the man in his everyday domestic surroundings at the Duplays'. It is a more unstudied picture than the other. Like Madame d'Abrantès, Barras was immensely impressed by the scene which he describes, for his narrative is marked by a vivacity and intensity that are rare with him.

The visit which Barras recounts was one that he made in company with Fréron in order to obtain the Dictator's "absolution" for the "revolutionary" acts he and his companions had committed.

The visitors—they might have been Robert Macaire and Bertrand but for their attire—found the "tyrant" at his toilet.

"Robespierre was standing up swathed in a sort of overall, half shirt, half dressing-gown. He had just been receiving the attentions of his coiffeur, and was without the spectacles he generally wore. Through the powder, which lent an added pallor to his naturally colourless complexion, two restless eyes peered at us with an expression we had never seen on his face before. He was gazing at us fixedly with an air that betokened astonishment at our appearance. We saluted him without constraint according to our wont and the unaffected fashion of the day. He paid no heed to our salute but continued to look at himself, now in a mirror hung up at the window which overlooked the court, now in a little glass originally intended no doubt to adorn his mantelpiece. He next picked up his toilet knife and scraped away the powder with which his face was covered, taking great care not to disarrange his hair. He then took off his dressing-gown and threw it on a chair so close to us as to soil our clothes, making no apology nor so much as showing that he was aware of our presence. He washed in a sort of basin which he held in one hand, cleaned his teeth, spat several times on

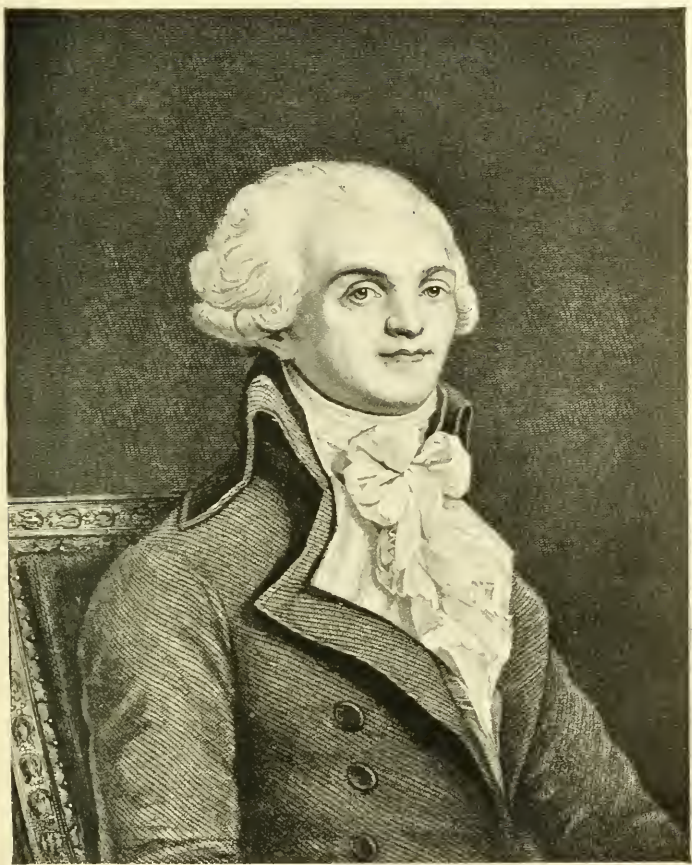
the ground where we were standing without paying any heed to us. It was nearly as bad as Potemkin who, it will be remembered, never even troubled to turn away his head, but without heed or warning spat straight out in the direction of any one that happened to be in front of him." *

Barras, with a naïveté that he does not usually betray, makes no effort to conceal the contempt with which he was treated by the Dictator, a circumstance which points to the unconscious veracity of his story, veracity being a quality generally somewhat rare with him.

"Never," he goes on, "have I seen aught so impassive as his countenance, not even in the cold marble of a statue or in the faces of the shrouded dead. Only once have I since beheld upon the political stage a living face whose stillness seemed to vie with, nay, even to transcend, the cold impassivity of death. Whether this impassivity was a natural characteristic of the man or whether it was the acquired habit of one whose constitutional perversity was wrought to a finish by the complex processes of what we call civilisation, it would be hard to tell. What at all events is certain is that the likeness which I have already remarked upon as existing between Marat and Bonaparte in respect of their incessant energy and restlessness, and the resemblance which, on a totally opposite account—that of their almost lifeless impassivity—is noticeable between Robespierre and the man whom we shall introduce later on in these memories (Talleyrand) are the most striking parallels that history has to show.

"Such then was our meeting with Robespierre, interview I can hardly call it since he did not so much as open his mouth. He merely compressed more grimly his tightly drawn lips, and on them I beheld a sort of bilious froth that augured ill for our reception. I had soon had quite enough of the business. My eyes had

* "Mémoires de Barras," pp. 150-151.



ROBESPIERRE
From an engraving by W. H. Mote

seen the being who has since received the decidedly appropriate nickname of 'le chat-tigre.' I can only repeat that those who never beheld Robespierre face to face could not get a more exact notion of the general appearance of the man, of his habits; his dress, his powdered wig and scrupulous, *recherché* mode of attire than by recalling to mind another figure who was also destined to play, but for a longer period than Robespierre; a conspicuous rôle on the world's stage, to wit Talleyrand." *

Such were the Dictator's physical characteristics. Let us now look at the character which another of his contemporaries, Fouché, bestows upon him. Fouché was a far cleverer man than Barras. He it was who was really responsible for Robespierre's downfall and who was later to prove the most formidable of Napoleon's contemporaries and to display an unequalled faculty for "playing" the Great Man.

"The moving spirit," says Fouché, "is Maximilian Robespierre. Danton's death on the 5th April crowned him King. For six months his power has been disputed, threatened, held in check. But by a diplomacy, marked by cunning rather than by courage, he has made himself all powerful. Giants have been brought low by him: Vergniaud, who had the support of the departments; Hébert, though he was upheld by the Commune de Paris; and Danton, though he was backed by the Convention itself, all have licked the dust !

"The Assembly is terrorised, the Commune cowed, and absolutely at the beck and call of its new master. From this date begins that uncanny influence, that preter-human popularity of which we find Collot and Billaud, eye-witnesses of its effects, speaking with a terror that even after Thermidor still continued to obsess them. He was not a violent man; though sometimes;

* "Mémoires de Barras," pp. 150-151.

if his dignity were ruffled, he would grow white with passion. He was a calculator, an opportunist. Taking Rousseau for his master, he exhibited all the narrowness and self-assurance of the typical doctrinaire. Never even for an instant did he doubt the correctness of his conclusions, and his statements had the dogmatic finality of *ex-cathedra* utterances. His pride was immense, his vanity monstrous. His belief in himself, his doctrines and his mission was childlike because it was boundless, but to the fulfilment of his aims he brought a cunning which was in the highest degree disconcerting, for it continually led him to throw over the friend of to-day in order to further some fresh conspiracy of the morrow. Yet he was no Tartuffe, not even a Machiavelli. He was sincere, terribly sincere. Convinced that he was designed to be the representative *par excellence* of his fellow-men, that he was the incarnate symbol of Liberty, of the Revolution and the Republic, he considered in all good faith that his enemies, those who attempted to repress or destroy him, were the foremost adversaries, the direct foes of the Republic, of the Revolution and of Liberty. Thus it was that no consideration, no scruple, no sense of pity, no memory of bygone days availed to stay his hand. Sentiment indeed he held cheap, for never in his life had he cared for any one but himself. Though he put a low price on old associations, old ties of friendship, we must do him the justice to add that he never forgave an offence. In his case every dart was envenomed, every wound poisoned and everlastingly incurable. His integrity, which though scrupulous has been too much advertised, his famous "incorruptibility," imparted an insufferable arrogance to a manner that was naturally despotic. Just as every one of Maximilian's enemies became by the mere fact of being his enemy the enemy of the Republic, so, too, any man whose mode of life was questionable was equally an enemy of the State and

needed crushing. So we behold him sombre, suspicious, eternally beset by gloomy reflections since the world seemed to him to be filled by rogues, wretches and assassins bent on the destruction of the Republic and of himself. He lived like one for ever haunted by the conviction—and there was solid foundation for it—that the moment he forebore to strike he himself would be stricken down. The worst of the matter was that it was impossible to please him, impossible to win his favour, because the rigidity of his doctrines was only equalled by the capriciousness with which he applied them. The political world had lost its bearings and knew not what to think. The fear which he inspired in some was just as baseless as the hope he aroused in others. Every one was on tenterhooks, and therein lay the secret of his power. For some months now Maximilian had had everything in his hands, having succeeded in constituting himself the supreme governor of the state, the enemy of godlessness and the protector of property.” *

Mallet du Pan has also contributed a portrait of Robespierre which is at once so striking and so accurate that no idea of the man's personality would be complete without it.

“Until the beginning of February,” he observes, “Robespierre dominated the Committee of Public Safety just as the Committee of Public Safety dominated everything else. Whoever—Frenchman or foreigner—basing his estimate of Robespierre on the successes which he achieved, credits him with the possession of conspicuous talents and looks upon him as a consummate leader, a profound statesman and a second Cromwell, is conjuring up a picture vastly wide of the truth.

“Robespierre never was and never will be capable of sustaining the part he has undertaken. To a large

* “Mémoires de Fouché,” by Louis Madelin, pp. 154-156.

extent disregarded in the first Convention, even by the Left, with whom he had no influence, forgotten during the Legislature, never having obtained more than the lukewarm confidence of the Brissotins, he did not really become the centre of affairs, the principal object of attention, until after the death of Marat. Gloomy, suspicious; mistrustful of his best friends, bigoted, vindictive and implacable, he is the counterpart of that Pygmalion King of Tyre whose story we read of in Fénelon.

“ To-day we behold him emaciated, hollow-eyed, livid, staring about him with wild, unquiet eyes. Crime and Remorse are written upon his countenance. Haunted by terror, he never goes abroad without an escort of three picked sansculottes armed to the teeth who ride with him in his carriage. Returning to his mean abode he bolts and bars himself in and will not open his door without observing the most exaggerated precautions. If he dines anywhere but in his own house he will always have a couple of pistols on the table, one on each side of his plate, and no domestic is allowed to stand behind his chair. He never touches a dish until one of the guests has eaten of it, and he looks about him with restless and suspicious eyes, mistrusts the man, whoever it may be, on whom he has to rely, beholds an enemy in every one of his colleagues and lives in perpetual dread of poison or assassination.

“ To his simple tastes, his abstemiousness, his comparative indifference to pleasure as well as to the unselfishness with which he is generally credited, are to be ascribed the origin and continuance of his popularity.

“ He has no money whatever, and his incorruptible honesty is in striking contrast with the rapacity of his associates. He lives entirely upon the salary he receives as a deputy, and saves enough on his household expenses to keep up the shabby equipage which he considers

indispensable for his safety. To avoid the slightest appearance of anything approaching luxury, he has the vehicle numbered like a common fiacre.*

“Time was when the Brissotins accused him of aiming at making himself dictator, protector and even King, an accusation which is repeated by his detractors at the present day. Though the charge is not totally devoid of justification, it is generally too much insisted upon. Robespierre’s anxiety to remain paramount is engendered not so much by ambition as by fear. Fear indeed is the key to the man’s whole career, the explanation of his character. Knowing with what manner of men he had to share his political power, recognising from his predecessors’ experience how difficult a task it is to retain the leadership, he has a dread of all whom he might suppose to be animated by misgivings similar to his own, all those who aim at high places, demagogues;

* In the correspondence which provided Mallet du Pan with the raw material for his portraits, we read the following:—“He never allows anyone very near him. Even in the Committee of Public Safety he takes up his position in such a manner that no one can get right up to him. When he returns home he shuts himself up in his closet, the doors of which are kept on the chain and provided with triple bolts. There he will see nobody. In order to conceal the terrors that beset him he occasionally dines out with a few of his colleagues on the Committee of Public Safety. I chanced on two occasions to meet him at dinner at Mlle. de Vir. . . ’s. I observed him closely, and noticed what a perpetual fright he was in. When he took his seat at the table he placed before him a couple of double-barrelled pistols which he never failed to carry about with him wherever he went. If he was the first to be offered a certain dish he would help himself to it, but he would never touch a morsel till he saw three or four other people eating it as well. He affected a contempt for worldly goods, and when it was pointed out to him that the war was taking all the money out of the country he replied, ‘So much the better; the French people will never know happiness till they have nothing left but iron for their ploughshares and picks.’ His contempt for riches is largely the cause of the high opinion in which he is held by the patriots, who, in their sense of the word, justly refer to him as the incorruptible, for it never was and never will be possible to buy him. He pretends to despise women just as he despises money, and is continually preaching about virtue and morality. He prides himself on setting an example of chaste living and he was never known to possess either wife or mistress.”

place hunters and hypocrites. Surrounded as he is by rivals, by men who jealously observe his every act, without a friend on whom to rely or a partisan on whom to count, his policy is to rid himself of all possible competitors one after another, and so reign alone." *

We will now consider the light in which this unnatural being was regarded by contemporary society. It will assist us, in forming an opinion as to whether Tallien was or was not the dauntless hero whom the Princesse de Chimay describes as keeping sleepless vigil round her prison and perpetually striving to wring her freedom from the Dictator.

"Since the death of Danton and Desmoulins, he has possibly made no more dupes, but he makes men fear him, and that is deceit in another form. Literally, in the true and proper sense of the word, the Assembly quakes and trembles with a feverish terror. The Committee of Public Safety, notwithstanding that the majority of its members are opposed to him, regard him with a sort of agony of apprehension. The deputies under condemnation, of whom lists are being hawked about everywhere, are at their wits' end, panic-stricken, leaderless and disunited, fear or hatred holding them apart. Had not Robespierre destroyed Vergniaud by means of Hébert, Hébert by means of Danton, Danton by means of Billaud? Yet Hébert, Danton, Billaud were one and all foes of Robespierre. This mistrust it was, according to one of the threatened deputies; that prevented any united action. Men despaired of overcoming Robespierre or of escaping from him otherwise than by hiding themselves. No less than sixty deputies dared not lie down to sleep in their own homes; others, according to Lecointre, one of their number, were so overcome with terror that they were obliged to take to their beds. There were at least a hundred deputies who hovered

* Mallet du Pan, "*Mémoires et Correspondance*," vol. ii, pp. 41-43.

before Robespierre like birds fascinated by a serpent, waiting for the fatal spring which should bring them within its maw. The Paris Commune was now on his side. He was supreme among the Jacobins, the Franciscans bowed to his authority. The 'constitutional' Catholics with Gregoire and Durand de Maillane gave him their support, and not only they but the bourgeoisie as well, for he represented the triumph of a system. Robespierre had resuscitated God and restored confidence to the capitalists. True, the Committee and the Convention were his enemies, and among them he counted dangerous foes whose ferocity was increased tenfold by their fear. But also among them were firebrands such as Legendre, orators like Tallien; schemers like Barras; influential committeemen such as Collot, Billaud and Vadier, prominent Republicans like Cambon and Carnot. Yet who of them all was more eloquent than Vergniaud, more violent than Hébert, more adroit than Chaumette, more powerful than Danton? Who was a more thorough-going Republican than Desmoulins and Hérault de Séchelles, than Condorcet and Brissot? But the reason of their discouragement may be explained. These dumb orators; these listless men of action, these strong men made weak by fear, these common foes of a single master, sundered and divided among themselves, had one great need—they lacked a leader, one who would give them counsel and be a bond of union between them. But when on the morning of the 18th Germinal, Fouché came to take his seat at the Convention between the two decimated groups to which his alternating policies equally attached him, the bond was there, the counsellor had been found." *

All this which Madelin says so well concerning Fouché was confirmed by Barras, who however endeavours to give the impression that Fouché's rôle was merely a

* "Mémoires de Fouché," by Louis Madelin, pp. 162-163.

subordinate one, whereas in reality he himself, like Tallien and the other conspirators, was but a puppet in Fouché's hands. If we read between the lines of Barras' laboured statement, it becomes perfectly clear, in spite of the writer's vain attempts to dissemble the truth, that the man who really brought about the tyrant's downfall was Fouché and no other.

"I knew that my policy with regard to Robespierre had been attempted, though with indifferent success, by both Tallien and Fouché. I was aware that the efforts of each had been met with obstinate silence, that to all their remonstrances, all their fair words, Robespierre had resolutely turned a deaf ear, without so much as moving a muscle of his face or making the slightest sign. When a man holds the sceptre of life and death in his hands there is something more terrifying in silence than in open threats. Thus, as I have already stated, Robespierre's inscrutable air of grim severity, added to his terrible prerogative of bringing whomsoever he willed to the scaffold, possibly played an important part in the panic which seized on those whom he made the object of attack.

"But this latter day Salmoneus, for all his anxiety to wield Jove's lightning single-handed, could not entirely dispense with assistance. I have shown that among the Committee he had only Couthon and Saint Just on his side. The first object to whose accomplishment he addressed himself was to strike at those of his supposed enemies who had hitherto escaped him or who seemed to be rising into prominence again, and these he regarded with unwearying animosity. Chief among those whom he had marked down for destruction was Fouché, and as it seemed likely that Fouché's doom would not be long delayed, it was naturally thought that he would be among the first to strike a blow at Robespierre.

"Great, however, as Fouché's danger was allowed to

be; his precarious position was not to be ascribed to any intrepid defiance of the Dictator. His record indeed as an ultra revolutionary was as complete as it well could be; he had no reason to reproach himself with half-heartedness, and had proved himself a Terrorist of the first water. Notwithstanding this he had not succeeded in thoroughly meeting Robespierre's views; or, to speak more accurately, he had exceeded them and so made an enemy of him. Such being Fouché's position he was debarred from coming out into the open, from making, as it were, a frontal attack upon his adversary. Robespierre had told Fouché that 'crime was written on his countenance.' To this Fouché dared make no reply. Expelled by the Jacobins he could not re-appear at their meetings, he did not venture even to show his face at the Convention. Nevertheless he went on plotting and intriguing with a will. I used to send him now to one, now to another, to carry tidings of what came to our ears concerning the intentions of Robespierre, Saint Just and Couthon. The fear in which he personally stood with regard to the triumvirate only served to strengthen his conviction of their hostile intentions. Sincere too as his fears undoubtedly were, his policy prompted him to exaggerate them still more to the men whom he was desirous of inciting to form a party. From dawn to dark he would hurry round to deputies of all shades of opinion saying 'when to-morrow comes either you or he will die.' To those who cherished Danton's memory, and were in fear lest the wrath of his murderers should be directed against them also, he would say 'to-morrow vengeance may be ours, and not till then can we account ourselves safe.' To such a degree did Robespierre strike terror into the hearts of his adversaries that we have heard it said that a member of the Convention who had been sitting thoughtfully for a while with his hand to his brow suddenly started and withdrew his hand exclaiming,

'He'll be thinking I've got some mischief or other in my mind.' To instil courage into men so utterly cowed required not a few speeches skilfully worded so as to make a direct appeal to the individual interests of each hearer. He succeeded, by employing his signal talents for intrigue, in bringing men of diverse views to sink their differences and unite together on the basis of their common detestation of Robespierre, and it cannot be denied that by welding together these various elements he proved himself a most valuable agent in securing the success that was directed against the oppressors of the Convention." *

Thus Barras endeavours to give himself the appearance of a party leader, representing Fouché as no more than a humble worker in the movement that brought about the Tyrant's fall. But his clumsy devices were immeasurably inferior to the subtle finesse, the Machiavelian strategy of Fouché. Remaining in the background himself and thrusting forward others—Tallien, the least intelligent; in the forefront of all—it was Fouché, the silent and unseen, who was really the brain of the affair, who inspired the tactics of the party as a whole.

"It is obvious that at this time Fouché's position was as precarious as it could well be. I have already related how Fouché and Tallien had each made deferential overtures to Robespierre and how both of them had, like Fréron and myself, been met with obdurate silence and an utter refusal to enter into explanations. Matters had been going from bad to worse. The means of reconciliation were at an end. Despite all his caution, a letter in Fouché's handwriting had been discovered in which the following sentence, addressed to one of his colleagues in the Convention, was conspicuously noticeable. 'Before two more weeks are over either Maximilian or ourselves will be no more.'

* "Mémoires de Barras," pp. 178-180

“The struggle therefore could only end with the annihilation of one party or the other—it was a case of victory or death.

“But although Fouché was compelled to take measures for his defence, he was not the man to do so openly. He readily adopted those tortuous and indirect methods in which his early training as an Oratorian had made him an adept, and as everything is grist that comes to the mill, and as in the case of a conspiracy; which after all is only a graver kind of intrigue, the art of manœuvring is a quality essential to success, it is clear that Fouché was, if not on the score of courage, at all events indirectly, a valuable coadjutor in the events that were about to take place.

“He subsequently claimed to be the man who dealt Robespierre his death blow. The real fact is that in order to keep out of the way of Robespierre’s wrath and if possible to suffer himself to fade from the Dictator’s implacable memory, Fouché absented himself from the National Convention and never slept at home. Waiting for night to fall he used to make his rounds among those of his colleagues who were involved in the anti-Robespierriist movement, busily going backwards and forwards with the latest news, carrying out such commissions as the progress of events demanded should be discharged adroitly in order to consolidate the party we were forming, till the moment should come to strike the decisive blow.” *

Louis Madelin has said the same thing, only he has said it more effectively and with greater frankness.

“The feeling of terror increased: the deputies no longer had the courage to show their faces at the Convention and took up their abodes, according to Garnier, in the most out of the way dens in the capital.

“Fouché was by no means the last to disappear. He seemed to be getting out of touch with the Jacobins, and

* “*Mémoires de Barras*,” pp. 183–184.

a month later they did in fact throw him over completely. But as early as the last days of Prairial his sagacity led him to regard the position as hopeless. It was but a few months before [and the memory of the incident was still fresh in men's minds] that Robespierre had compelled the society to expel its ex-president, Cloots, and to overwhelm him with insult and obloquy. Fouché was convinced that a similar fate awaited him, particularly after the reverse he had sustained on the 23rd. But though the Jacobins were lost to him, the Committee and the Assembly still presented a field for conquest. The very feeling of dread which Robespierre considered it politic to inspire might be converted into a weapon against him. The situation demanded that a bond of union should be formed between the disunited antagonists of Robespierre. To this end Fouché spread abroad those terrible lists wherein the names of men of all parties were jostled together indiscriminately. Waverers were encouraged, fuel was added to hatred and to fear, for when the time came hatred and fear were to be the forces that should spur his forces to the assault. Meanwhile he himself remained discreetly in the background out of sight. Obviously he could not be both general and scout. Ah, this time it was with no panic-stricken Bazire or Chabot rushing blindly to their doom that Robespierre had to deal. It was now that Fouché began his subterranean tactics. He abandoned his rooms in the rue Saint Honoré and burrowed none knew where, wandering from one hiding-place to another, never showing himself among the Jacobins or at the Assembly. As night began to fall he might be seen going now to this house, now to that, with the same words everlastingly upon his lips, 'You are on the list.' Barras used to see him, and Tallien and Billaud also, and they turned his services to account. 'Your time will come to-morrow; either you or he will perish,' he

would exclaim to a Girondist whom some miracle had preserved from death, or to a Montagnard who was or believed himself to be on Robespierre's black list. Wherever he went he found a welcome." *

We need only contrast the wild excitement displayed by Tallien from the 4th to the 8th Thermidor, and more especially his behaviour of the 9th, with the perfect self-possession manifested by Fouché during the fortnight which preceded the fateful day, to recognise beyond all possibility of doubt that Fouché was the brains of the movement. Tallien was a mere super, a puppet that had to be galvanised into action up to the very last. His language and bearing generally were suggestive of a man possessed, and he was, in fact, beside himself with terror. In this respect there was no great difference between Tallien and the other members of the Convention who joined in the movement. Nor were the objects of their attack any less the victims of fear. Robespierre the younger, Le Bas, David, Couthon, all save Saint Just were in an agony of terror. Alone of them all, Fouché, calm and collected, led the onslaught with consummate coolness, and showing himself stronger in the hour of triumph than when the issue was still in doubt, retired once more into the background when the fight was won and Robespierre was no more.†

* "Mémoires de Fouché," by Louis Madelin, pp. 171-172.

† Long before the commencement of the famous sitting which was to witness the triumph or the downfall of Robespierre the whole château was in an uproar. Even those least able to judge felt that a storm was at hand. Robespierre's promised supporters were there in large numbers and were easily recognisable by the carelessness of their attire and their red caps. Most of them were seated with sword-sticks between their legs, the remaining few being armed with batons. Robespierre was among the last to appear on the scene. "He no longer showed that serenity, that confidence in his own powers which he used ordinarily to display, and Tallien had barely commenced his reply to Saint Just, when a look of restless anxiety took possession of his countenance, which in the course of the speech became alternately livid and crimson. Alike in the few words which with his shrill voice

"In reality the events of the 26th could not have occasioned any excessive surprise to Fouché, the ex-president of the Jacobins. Even so long ago as the latter days of Prairial he had realised that the game was up so far as that body was concerned, and the danger in which his excommunication placed him, a danger whose formidable nature may be measured by the fact that for six months past a similar ban had never been pronounced without being followed by the arrest, arraignment and execution of the victim—this danger, imminent though it was, awoke but one idea in his mind, and that was to redouble his energies and bring matters to a head before another fortnight was over. To the fulfilment of that object he directed all his efforts. His first act was to attempt to bring about a reconciliation between the leaders of the two anti-Robespierrist factions, Billaud and Tallien. With Tallien and Barras he formed a sort of triumvirate which busied itself with scattering abroad imaginary lists of intended victims with the object of instilling fear into the minds of those who believed themselves about to be the next to suffer, and so stirring them up to take part actively against Robespierre. Lastly he betook himself to Billaud, Collot and Carnot, and so made sure of the Convention, while every day, according to Tallien, he would come and give an account to the leaders of the conspiracy of what was passing at the Tuileries.

"His coolness and his confidence were extraordinary. he managed to utter and in his whole bearing he manifested a hesitation that amounted even to poltroonery.

"Saint Just, who was the first to realise that all was lost, henceforth said not another word, made never a sign. Buried in his own thoughts he leaned in motionless silence against the woodwork of the tribune, the tribune from which but a little time before he had won his most brilliant triumphs. His face was pale, and ever and anon while his enemy Barère was thundering out denunciations above him, he would exchange a melancholy glance with Robespierre."—G. Lenotre, "*Paris Révolutionnaire*," pp. 118–119, founded upon the narrative of an eye-witness, P. Morice.

Perhaps, however, he was affecting a nonchalance which he did not really feel when, on the morrow of his expulsion from the Jacobins, he wrote to his sister, the Citoyenne Broband at Nantes, as follows : ' I am not in the least afraid of the calumnies of Maximilian Robespierre. . . . I was called upon to explain my conduct before the Jacobins in full assembly, but I did not go since Robespierre is paramount there, indeed the society has become a sort of tribunal of his. Before long you will hear how matters have gone, and I trust the issue will turn out to the advantage of the Republic.'

" The letter was intercepted by Bo, a *représentant en mission* at Nantes and forwarded to Robespierre on the 3rd Thermidor. Robespierre's reply was quickly forthcoming. On the 5th, according to Barère, Saint Just demanded as an earnest that peace was to prevail among the members of the Committee (the anti-Robespierriest faction had been unable to make up their minds to cut themselves adrift) that an indictment should be framed against Fouché, and that on the strength of that indictment he was to be brought first to the Conciergerie and then to the guillotine. According to his own account, Barère refused to comply, thus showing that there were good grounds for Fouché's coolness in the Committee. On the 30th Messidor he had addressed another letter to the people of Nantes promising to plead their cause before the Committee. ' Make your minds easy regarding the abominable slanders that have been hurled against me. I shall make no attempt to reply to my calumniators : they have shut my mouth, but the government will shortly judge between them and me, and you may rely on justice being done.'

" Such unruffled calm at such a crisis is certainly remarkable, for at the moment Robespierre's antagonists were experiencing a fresh wave of depression. The more deeply involved were panic-stricken, and made no attempt

to act ; the Committee was not so sure as it was represented to be ; Collot alternately upbraided and embraced Robespierre, and was quite ready to throw over Fouché (he did throw him over—and that on the 9th Thermidor—falsely declaring that he had not seen him for two months) ; Carnot was extremely hostile to Robespierre, but cautious, cold and embarrassed to the last degree, utterly incapable of violence or intrigue ; Barère in his insinuating manner lent his support to anyone who seemed to be triumphing for the moment, and no man was less to be trusted than he. Since the 26th Messidor, Fouché had been an outlaw, more thoroughly so than anyone else. His name alone had been openly pronounced by Robespierre. He was wandering secretly from place to place not daring to show his face. In addition to this, his little daughter, of whom he was very fond, was dying in his arms. ‘Our poor little maid,’ he wrote on the 3rd Thermidor, ‘is still in an alarmingly prostrate condition, but we have not lost hope, we shall pull her through with care.’ But it was not to be. Truly the man who could pass through what he went through and not lose heart, though everything seemed to be conspiring to work his overthrow, could face anything. Despite his frail and delicate appearance, the man was a giant. He never wavered. ‘I will say nothing about my cause which is the cause of all true patriots,’ he wrote on the 3rd, ‘since it is recognised that it is against my integrity, which none have been able to impair, that the place-hunters are making war. A few days more and truth and justice will have won a signal victory.’ And on the 5th Thermidor he wrote again : ‘Brother and friend, let your mind be at rest, the spirit of patriotism will triumph over tyranny and over all those vile and despicable passions which are in league together to hold it in bondage. Yet a few days more and the knaves, the

criminals, will be seen in their true colours; and the integrity of upright men will win the day. Even to-day perchance the traitors will be unmasked.'

"Well might the man who wrote in this strain on the 5th Thermidor exclaim a year later when pleading his cause before the Convention: 'All France remembers that while Robespierre was playing the despot over you, and you yourselves yielded degrading homage to the triumph of his crimes, to his cruel and murderous tyranny, I was almost the only one to make a stand against him.' *

"He was given up for lost almost more universally than Hébert and Danton had been on the eve of their death. Thibaudeau reports that he saw the famous lists of outlaws going the round of the Convention, and that on them friends and foes alike inscribed the name of Fouché.

"The worst of it was that the Men of the Marsh were waiting to see which way the wind blew, and displayed small anxiety to transfer their support to the extremists of the Mountain. Among the latter the position was regarded as hopeless. Collot was already declaring himself no friend of Fouché. 'The unrest is incredible,' wrote the United States Minister. But the terror was even greater than the unrest!

"Fouché's confidence was unshaken. So confident was he indeed that he subsequently represented himself as having on the 7th Thermidor rejected advances for a

* Nor indeed did he make his stand any too soon, for the Tyrant and the faithful remnant of his following were beginning to get an inkling of the coalition that was being formed against them. Robespierre even went so far as to make open allusion to the matter on the 6th Thermidor, when he made reference to the disorder that was being fomented in the Convention. Turquan recalls how "Couthon, who mounted the tribune after Robespierre, was still more explicit and declared that the faction leaders were sitting in the Convention and that there were five or six representatives there whose hands were full of the spoils of the Republic and reeking with the blood of the guiltless whom they had slain." Short of mentioning names, a more unmistakable reference to the *représentants en mission* could scarcely have been made.

reconciliation with Robespierre. He put in no further appearances at the Convention. He urged others into the fray but himself remained in the background. Thus he played no visible part in the memorable sittings of the 8th and 9th. Yet it was around his name that the battle of the 8th was fought. On that day Panis rose and called upon Robespierre for an explanation of his conduct in regard to the people who at his instigation had been expelled from the Jacobins. 'I call upon him,' he shouted, 'to explain these things and to explain his treatment of Fouché.' The challenge was greeted with applause. There was a possibility of Robespierre working Fouché's ruin by disuniting him from his friends, a consummation which the latter may secretly have desired, for Collot looked ashamed of his acquaintance.

"The Dictator gave an indefinite reply. He did not intend to go back on what he had done : he had slandered no one. 'What about Fouché?' shouted Panis. 'Fouché,' retorted Robespierre, 'well, I will not deal with him now. I am not going to be drawn into these matters. I simply intend to do my duty.'

"Was it his object to convey to the extremists of the Mountain the idea that Fouché was contemplating their betrayal? Seeing the sort of man he was there is no great unlikelihood about the report. That very evening a violent altercation took place between Collot and Saint Just when the latter, in order to bring about a cleavage in the ranks of the conspirators, gave his colleague to understand that Fouché was seeking a reconciliation with Maximilian. The battle was still raging round Fouché's name when the sun rose on the 9th Thermidor. At five o'clock the members of the Committee made up their minds to find out once for all how matters stood, and sent for Fouché.

"Fouché had seen Barras and Tallien the previous night, and had remarked with great coolness that the



Fouché, duc d'Otrante

Duc d'Angoulême

Chancelier de l'Université de la petite Couronne

1807-1814

FOUCHÉ, DUKE OF OTRANTO

From an engraving

blow must be struck next day. So secure did he deem his position that he unhesitatingly answered the Committee's summons, and appeared at the Tuileries somewhere between nine and eleven o'clock. Calmly, yet not without a touch of bitterness, he replied to the charges brought against him by Collot, his quondam friend. He was, he said, no friend of Robespierre. He was doubtless the more confirmed in his resolution to disavow such a friendship when, on leaving the château, there stole upon his ears the first mutterings of the storm that was soon to work the Dictator's undoing.

"We need not here recount the scene again, a scene so moving that a distinguished dramatist has had merely to represent the incidents as they are set forth in the bare official records in order to produce one of the most thrilling episodes in his play. We behold Saint Just swiftly taking the offensive in a speech of dark and dubious import, the arrival of the Committee with Fouché's words still ringing in their ears, some adroit yet violent oratory from Billaud, a passionate harangue from Tallien. Then comes a speech from the ever pusillanimous Barère, some comic relief from the egregious Vadier followed by Tallien's amazing reappearance on the scene, the shouting, the interruptions of the Mountain now at white heat and torn this way and that in a frenzy of bewilderment. We see Robespierre stung first to bitterness and then to fury by the cold demeanour of the Plain. We hear the deafening uproar pierced at intervals by the ringing of the Presidential bell wielded successively by Collot d'Herbois and Thuriot, and then finally the great climax, the arrest of Maximilian and Augustin Robespierre, Couthon; Saint Just and Lebas. Behind it all had been the patient, slow and stealthy toil of one who had never shown his face at the Tuileries. Fouché it was who had prepared the mine, and how skilfully he had done his work was seen

on the evening of that day when the Jacobins appeared nothing but a bewildered rabble, paralysed by reason of their own dissensions. All this was the outcome of Fouché's election in Prairial." *

After this masterly account of Louis Madelin's, nothing further is required to demolish the legend of Notre Dame de Thermidor and the story of Tallien hurling down the Tyrant from his seat.

But Theresia Cabarrus is now about to come forth from her prison associated in the popular imagination with the man who would have betrayed his mistress to her enemies ten times over in order to preserve his own craven life. It now behoves us to examine the various theatrical devices that were employed to set off the Thermidorian legend, to see, that is to say, in what manner it really was that Madame Tallien made her entry into history.

* "Mémoires de Fouché," by Louis Madelin, pp. 175-179.

CHAPTER III

Tallien neglects to obtain his mistress's freedom until the 12th Thermidor—A psychological study of Theresia and Tallien during Thermidor, year II—How their reputations were gained by reason of the part supposed to have been played by them in Robespierre's fall and how they strove to foster the legend—The Terrorist simulates a renewal of his love—How Theresia's second child was conceived—The two lovers dwell for a time apart—Tallien practises clemency in order to gain popularity—Theresia sells her furniture at Bordeaux and makes a pretence of poverty—Guéry's release—Tallien not in favour with the Jacobins—He resigns his seat on the Committee of Public Safety—His attempted assassination—Popular enthusiasm at his escape—Theresia's blindness regarding Tallien's real political status—He espouses the Royalist cause—The motives which induced him to marry.

1794

ON the morrow of the 9th Thermidor, as soon as it was light, Tallien tore away to La Force to set Theresia free, for of course he had procured an order for her release without the smallest difficulty. Was he not the heaven-sent vanquisher of the Tyrant, the Liberator of Liberators! Who therefore would dare to haggle or to quibble with him concerning the freedom of his beloved?

But stay, gentle reader, not so fast. Where do we learn all this? Learn it! But how could it be otherwise? According to the story, Tallien's love for Theresia was the principal if not the only cause of the intrepidity which he displayed on the 9th Thermidor.

That is where you are at fault. Facts are stubborn things, and even pretty stories have to give way to them. It was not at daybreak on the 10th Thermidor that Robes-

pierre's fair captive regained her freedom. It was not until the 12th Thermidor that she was released !

On the 10th Tallien never so much as bestowed a thought on Theresia—he had very different business to attend to. The fact is Tallien did not really love Theresia. He could not indeed have been seriously aiming at winning her affection when at the end of 1793 he bade her choose between his bed and the guillotine. He merely wished for her because she was a lovely creature that stirred his physical passions, because he considered that to have her for his mistress would be a thing to boast about. Tallien however was too utterly fatuous and conceited an individual not to be readily convinced that his victim was growing enamoured of him, as she was doing her best to make him believe. The absurd way in which he advertised his “conquest” by putting her to read her *Discours sur l'Education* in the Temple of Reason at Bordeaux is proof that he thought himself beloved.

But Tallien, who had never really loved his mistress, for the simple reason that he was incapable of a genuine affection, as indeed he was of any generous feelings whatsoever—Tallien, in whose bosom the ci-devant Marquise de Fontenay had never awakened any feelings save those of physical desire, had by this time become sufficiently familiar with her charms to have quite ceased to be a prey to those irresistible longings that marked the beginning of their union. Henceforth the only thing that kept their partnership in being was the uncomfortable consciousness that each knew too many of the other's secrets, and that they were together too deeply implicated in all kinds of nefarious deeds to risk a quarrel.

We have seen that no sooner had our representative *en mission* returned to Paris to defend his conduct than he found it impossible to break with la Cabarrus. And so, too, when she came about the middle of May 1794 to join him in the capital it was out of the question for

him to disown or to accuse her, although to save his own skin he would certainly have been quite ready to do so. Wherefore then, we may ask, should he have rushed off to La Force on the 10th Thermidor in such terrible anxiety to procure her release.

On the 10th his interest was quite sufficiently taken up in watching the panic-stricken movements, the dramatic death struggles of the vanquished party. He could not breathe freely as long as Robespierre and his partisans Saint Just, Couthon, Henriot, Dumas, Fleuriot, Payan and the rest had their heads upon their shoulders. By eight o'clock that night there were more than a score of headless corpses, among them Boulanger and his colleague La Valette, to bring peace at last to his anxious spirit. They at all events would array themselves no more against him.

Still, this harvest was but the precursor of others that he hoped to gather, for he still had foes abroad. The dread events of August 10 had witnessed his political birth, and, as has been truly remarked, all through September 1792 he was "l'homme de la Terreur," and "l'homme de la Terreur" he remained.

Whatever part he played in bringing about Robespierre's fall was dictated by his own fear of the guillotine and not in the least by horror of the Dictator's enormities.*

No sooner was Robespierre dead than Tallien began

* This it was that evoked the following reproach from Mercier, an eye-witness of these events. "Thy dagger, Tallien," cries he. "Thou reservedst it for him whom thou fearest, but never didst thou use it to befriend the true sons of the Republic. Thou savedst thine own life, but little didst thou reck of the lives of others. Little did it trouble thee then that honest men were groaning in prison."—Mercier, "Nouveau Paris," p. 142.

And yet again: "Tallien, thou didst arise like some craven wretch when his garret catches fire and the flames reach the mattress of his bed. Thou didst don the buskin in the tragedy which ended the reign of Robespierre, but thou wert not the author of the play, and as for the tyranny of the Decemvirate, why, the men of the Mountain attempted to set it up again. That is the truth."—Mercier, "Nouveau Paris," p. 143.

to meditate butcheries that would have rivalled those of the fallen tyrant, and, that he did not put his ideas into execution, that he pretended to favour a policy of clemency that was in reality by no means to his taste, is solely attributable to the pressure of public opinion. He heard the murmur of the masses, who had taken heart a little—a very little—because they believed that the days of bloodshed were over. The 11th Thermidor found him demanding the head of little Mark Antony Jullien, a matter of infinitely greater importance to him than Theresia's safety.

"Down with Robespierre and all his crew!" he thundered at the Tribunal of the Convention. They were not satisfied, he went on, with putting at the head of the bench of prosecuting judges a mere stripling of nineteen who ought to have been fighting for his country on the frontiers. No, they must needs send him to a department in the South, there to exercise his powers with revolting cruelty and to shed rivers of blood in order that he might win favour in the eyes of Robespierre by sending him list upon list of victims.

Jullien the elder, deputy for La Drôme, asked leave to speak in his son's defence.*

Thureau diverted the attack by urging that they should proceed to the discussion of public business, and Tallien was baulked of his youthful prey, though he made up

* From a police report of the 18th Thermidor quoted by Aulard in his *Journées de Paris pendant la réaction thermidorienne*, we learn the effect of Tallien's attack on Jullien the younger.

"It having been reported that the Citoyen Jullien père (Drôme), a Representative of the People had wounded himself four times with a penknife, though only one of the four wounds was deep, an inspector proceeded to the spot and was informed by the Citoyen's wife, who was weeping and overcome with grief, that something that had happened to her son, a young man of nineteen (what the 'something' was she did not specify) had put her husband into a state of high fever by which he was still afflicted. She left the inspector without finishing the conversation, assuring him that there was no truth in the report that her husband had wounded himself with a knife."

for his disappointment as far as possible by having him thrown into prison shortly afterwards on an order of the Committee of Public Safety. It was urgently necessary for him to worm himself into that body in order to obliterate the traces of his misdeeds, to make away with all compromising documents and reports and wage successful warfare against his adversaries.

On the 11th Thermidor, therefore, all his energies were directed towards securing himself a seat in the Committee—Theresia was far from his thoughts. Again and again he demanded that the composition of the Committee should be changed. Bourdon de l'Oise—fearing probably that the measure boded him no good—offered a stout but unavailing resistance. Tallien would not give way. The morrow found him again assaulting the position, and his efforts were crowned with such success that on the 12th the Convention appointed him to the Committee with Bréard, Thuriot, Treilhard, Echassériaux and Laloï as his colleagues.

In the popular imagination, his eagerness to be appointed to the Committee of Public Safety was ascribed to his impatience to secure Theresia's release. None but the Princesse de Chimay could have invented such an explanation of her lover's cruel delay in obtaining her freedom, for if he had brought about Robespierre's downfall as he was popularly supposed to have done, what need had he to wait for a seat on the Committee before going to La Force to set the tyrant's captive free? No, Tallien's thoughts were solely of himself. He forgot that by the 11th Theresia, in common with all the other prisoners in all the other prisons, had been informed that the Dictator was no more.

Dismayed that her lover did not come to set her free, she doubtless began to tremble for her fate. Doubtless too she asked herself whether Tallien, henceforth master of the situation, would send her to the guillotine to avenge

himself for her infidelities and to remove all danger of awkward revelations. She knew, for she had seen them at their bloody work at Bordeaux, how the revolutionary tribunals were wont to condemn their prisoners unheard, how they hurried off their victims without so much as suffering them to utter a syllable in their own defence. Nay; the dying man or woman was denied the solace of uttering from the scaffold a last farewell to the people, for their voices had always been smothered by the roll of the drums ever since that excellent device had been employed with such telling effect in the case of Louis XVI.

As it happened, however, such thoughts were not in Tallien's mind. His sole aim was to make away with Robespierre's papers, and it was at his instance that the Convention resolved on this measure of destruction and entrusted the work to Courtois, the deputy, a cunning hypocrite who knew how to manage the business to the advantage of himself and his friends and how to get payment for the work of purgation into the bargain. Robespierre's, however, were not the only papers which troubled Tallien—there were others in the possession of d'Ossonville on which he also laid hands.*

* In the eighteenth chapter of his *Memoirs* Sénart goes into great detail concerning Tallien's delinquencies and misdeeds. It was d'Ossonville's special business to procure the detection of the manufacturers of forged assignats. Tallien believed that d'Ossonville possessed damning evidence against him and his accomplices. Consequently he never lost an opportunity, particularly after the 9th Thermidor, of using his influence to bring about his undoing, or at all events to shut him up within four walls.

On the 27th Thermidor, a fortnight after Robespierre's downfall he did in fact succeed in getting him thrown into prison, and during his confinement the papers which he had in his desk at the Committee of General Surety were abstracted, notwithstanding the seals that had been placed thereon and the metal plaque that was supposed to guarantee its safety. The plaque was removed, the seals broken and the lock forced. Who did it? "The men," says Sénart, "whom it behoved to make quite sure of securing the written evidence of their guilt"—and he makes special mention of Amar and Tallien. What then was the nature of the delinquencies in question? What was the crime committed by Tallien and his associates to which the stolen papers referred?

As Paris and then the Departments learned the great news they seemed scarcely able to realise what had happened. People appeared dazed as though they had been roughly awakened from a hideous dream.*

Sénart is very clear on the point. They dealt, he says, with the September massacres, and particularly with the false passports handed to priests who were afterwards put to death. There were also documents which clearly proved the existence of a plot with the Royalists abroad, papers relating to the crimes and misdeeds committed during the days of the Terror at Bordeaux, the Batz conspiracy, the plant for the manufacture of assignats discovered at Champigny in 1793, Tallien's efforts to ruin Jullien the Consul who had laid information with Robespierre concerning the crimes and robberies of which he had been guilty at Bordeaux, and finally the correspondence carried on by Tallien with the Spanish Ambassador with a view to restoring the Monarchy. Sénart also records the names of Tallien's accomplices, nearly all of them criminals of the worst description, such as Richer Serizi, of false passport fame, Ménée and Armand, convicted of complicity in the forgery of assignats at Champigny and condemned to twenty years' penal servitude at the Paris Criminal Court, Dumonceau, the Revolutionary police agent who was dismissed from the post by d'Ossonville, the rascally Dulac, who was employed in gaining the confidence of political prisoners, Amar, who was implicated in the manufacture of false assignats, Ducos, Vidric, Saint Romain, Proly, Desfieux, &c., and a whole string of women and prostitutes who were "wanted" on the charge of uttering forged assignats. Among Tallien's female accomplices, Sénart includes the notorious Fontenelle so well known to the suspects of Bordeaux, since it was through her or through Theresia that they bargained for their release, pardon or escape in exchange for tribute in the form of cash or other valuables.

* Charles Lacretelle in his reminiscences of the Revolution paints a vivid picture of the delight with which the news of Robespierre's death was hailed in the provinces. He relates how when at Noyon he had come to be afraid to open the newspapers for fear he should learn that his beloved ones in Paris had perished on the scaffold. "I saw in one of the papers," he writes, "that the Convention had refused to print a speech of Robespierre's. That piece of news gave me fresh hope, nay, it made me almost wild with delight. To-morrow, I thought, and he will be no more. Another day went by in gloomy suspense. I walked ever so far to meet the postman, and waited vainly for him hour after hour. The unusual delay told me that some catastrophe had occurred. I wondered whether my desires had been fulfilled. Somehow or other I could not help feeling that they had, though Heaven knows there were plenty of solid reasons to support a contrary conclusion. If Robespierre were thrown over by the Convention, was it likely that the People, the People whom he had made his accomplices, would also turn their backs upon him? When however a man revives a hope which he has long since forbidden himself to entertain

The stupor was but momentary. Paris rose as one man, furious at the thought of the agonies of terror it had been compelled to undergo, for it deemed that its fears were over for ever, swept away with the tyrant who, for the Parisians, was the symbol of all the murders that had been perpetrated.

Terrorists and assassins rushed helter skelter to their dens, and Paris uttered a great cry of vengeance.

It was not till the following day, not till the 10th Thermidor, that from Paris, from the whole of France, there burst forth from ten thousand, from a million breasts, the cry of "Mort aux Jacobins!" Blood was the universal shout, blood was the word traced by every pen, blood cried all those that sorrowed for the death of their loved ones. From every home upon whose lintels the Angel of Death had left his bloody trace there seemed to issue a spectre, the ghost of murdered son or murdered sire

he sets no limits to his enthusiasm. At last the longed for postman came in sight and the news he had let fall as he came along seemed to have restored life and the power of speech to a stricken race. This universal rejoicing was the surest proof that Robespierre was no more. Soon the diligences drove up and a number of smaller vehicles with people eager to give a detailed account of an event which seemed like a general deliverance, a universal resurrection. People flocked together in crowds, and the rejoicing grew wilder and wilder.

"People who only the day before had met each other in the street and passed by with every sign of mutual terror now hailed each other like old friends. Now that men had shaken off the incubus of the Terror they did not intend to let it get a hold on them again. If they unearthed some hoary Jacobin, a member of one of the Committees or of a revolutionary club, they would keep on tormenting him with accounts of the general rejoicing, persecuting him with the minutest details concerning the inevitable execution which was to include forty or fifty of Robespierre's friends. The fact that a number of Terrorists still survived did not alarm them, though they exercised a dominating influence in the Committee of Public Safety. In the minds of the people the 9th Thermidor meant not only the fall of the arch tyrant but the overthrow of tyranny itself, and from that day men like Billaud, Varennes, Collot d'Herbois, Vadier and the rest must have felt themselves doomed to perish in the seas of blood which they themselves had caused to flow."—"Dix années d'épreuves pendant la Révolution," pp. 180-182, by Ch. Lacretelle.

pacing forth side by side with the living, and everywhere the murmur arose "Mort aux Jacobins!"

When Robespierre went by with twenty of the chief Jacobins who had shared his fall after the 9th Thermidor, crowds filled the streets in holiday attire to see the tumbrils pass, so great was the popular rejoicing. Costumes of the old régime long since forgotten were to be seen at windows thronged with eager and delighted spectators. Everywhere the night was sped with song and dance. Utter strangers, meeting in the street, embraced and exchanged congratulations, weeping tears of joy. (*Journal des hommes libres*, 13 Thermidor.)

No one could talk of anything but the tyrant's last moments, for those who did not know all the details were dying to learn them, and the fifty thousand eye-witnesses of the death agony of Robespierre and his last adherents were pestered with questions.

The colporteurs were no less busy distributing reports of the famous séance of the 9th Thermidor, whereof the *Moniteur* could give but a faint and feeble idea, and one of more than dubious authenticity at that. But whatever details were lacking from the hearsay accounts the narrators would supply from their own imagination. There became current a sort of stereotyped picture, a simple, definite, vivid idea of the indescribable confusion and uproar of the famous sitting which witnessed the Tyrant's overthrow, and it was around Tallien and the brandished dagger, and Theresia and the love for her with which Tallien was credited, that the popular imagination played, and every one would have it that for his dagger and his inspiration he was indebted to no one but his mistress.

On the 12th Thermidor then, Tallien quite unexpectedly and through no effort of his own found that he and Theresia were the idols of the hour. There was nothing for it; he was indissolubly and irrevocably bound to his

mistress, the people would have that she was his "inspiratrice," and he had to accept the situation or come toppling down from the pedestal on which the popular imagination had perched him. In point of fact Theresia had not so much as entered his head, but now it was quite clear that she must not be suffered to remain a single hour longer in prison. So away he rushed to La Petite Force, doubtless concocting as he went along the story that we read in Houssaye, the story that was intended to exculpate him in his mistress's eyes for allowing her to languish in confinement until the 12th Thermidor. "I had," he said, "to gain a seat on the Committee of Public Safety and wring from my colleagues their consent to your release." As to whether Theresia took in this story it is difficult to say. She may have done. At all events she afterwards found it necessary to give it currency in order to explain away her lover's too significant forgetfulness. After all, it was a harmless invention compared with the correspondence they afterwards concocted together in order to bolster up the story.

Thermidor and the reaction which ensued brought Theresia Cabarrus to the turning-point of her existence. With her psychology—no very complex affair—we are already pretty familiar. We will, however, essay to draw a still completer picture of her and also to gain an insight into the ideas by which Tallien was really actuated. We shall then by a process of logical deduction be enabled to fill in the numerous gaps which confront us in their story.

Theresia—and we have noted the fact at the beginning of this study—was a born coquette, and there was nothing in her environment or in her education to counteract this dangerous tendency.

Too beautiful, too fully developed for her years, she was already more than half a woman when, according to her age, she ought still to have been wearing pinafores.

Such a state of affairs is more productive of perversity than of obedience and industrious habits. When she married she was physically ripe for wedlock, and while children born in the same year as herself were playing with their dolls with never a thought for the opposite sex, she had already had one or two by no means unimportant intrigues.

At fifteen we find her playing the coquette in good earnest, albeit the young men with whom she came in contact were animated less by love than by desire, for, though she possessed the gift of setting men's hearts on fire with the frenzy of passion, it was seldom her fortune to kindle the flame of a really genuine affection. Among the host of her admirers, among the many passionate but generally short-lived attachments she inspired, we can trace but a single instance of real unselfish love, that of her brother who died for her. The affection of her last husband, Monsieur de Caraman, powerful though it was, was less constant in its character and briefer in its duration. Perhaps, too, we ought to make mention of her idyll with the brothers Laborde, an episode which was cut short by death.

When the 9th Thermidor came she had been a wife, a mother, and a divorcée. She had moreover almost been guilty of incest (at least in thought) and the men who had possessed her could have been counted by the dozen almost—and she was not yet twenty-one !

The one art in which she was an adept was the art to please ; she cared for nothing else. From her childhood days every one had adored her, every one had sung her praises. True, Monsieur de Fontenay, her first husband, may have found fault with her, nagged at her, scolded her, but he was an inept individual, incapable and ill-brought up, in short, a vulgar little parvenu. Tallien too doubtless swore at her and probably beat her, but Tallien was a cur and a brute. These two exceptions

count for nothing, and the fact remains that all well-bred men, even the most aristocratic and the most eminent, were unwearied worshippers at her shrine. She had thus come to regard herself as the mirror of perfection, and her self-assurance had almost outstripped the bounds of reason. Seeing how eager was her ambition to dominate the hearts and minds of men, this conceit of hers might well have caused her to make some cruel miscalculations, and that she escaped such a contretemps is due to the fact that she never thought of making any but a sensual appeal to the men with whom she was brought in contact. In this direction success never failed to crown her efforts because her loveliness was irresistible and because she rarely showed herself unkind or inaccessible.

Now that she was free once more, what were her desires? What but to sparkle, to please, to be desired, envied, flattered and to queen it over a court of fond admirers who should ensure her an existence of unbroken happiness. Her great aim was happiness, no matter how she achieved it. She did not stay to formulate a programme, she seized her pleasures as they came, little surprised to find her wishes fulfilled even before they had taken definite shape in her own mind.

Tallien was a vastly different sort of personage, though he possessed many of Theresia's shortcomings. It was his fate to suffer as many disappointments as his wife achieved successes.

Tallien was born an idler and a thief. Theresia inherited from her father and mother her love of adventure, her sensuality and her talent for intrigue. To Tallien's servile origin on the other hand are to be ascribed the baseness, the meanness of his character, his cowardice, his arrogance and his cunning. His physical advantages, his tincture of education, his intercourse with people of breeding whose style he had learned to copy in his youth,



MADAME TALLIEN

From a painting by Bailly in the Musée Carnavalet

had early filled him with vanity, a vanity which the facile triumphs of the gutter quickly fanned into overweening presumption. Rapidly demoralised by the society which he loved to keep because he found there agreeable encouragement for all his evil proclivities, we find him at the outbreak of the Revolution ripe for a career of crime and spoliation, and the formation of the Paris Commune found him wallowing with coarse delight in the turbid waters of Anarchy.

To enrich himself and to minister to his own enjoyment he instigated the butcheries of August 10. Next he organised the September massacres in order to obliterate the traces of his dishonesty and once more to despoil the dying and the dead. Amazed at his newly discovered faculty of prompting others to crime and being now a rich man, he managed to purchase himself a seat in an assembly of political wreckers, and at the very first opportunity he had himself appointed as legal assassin, first at Tours and then at Bordeaux, in order that he might recommence his eternal game of pillage and rapine. However, Nemesis was upon him, and he himself was about to be dragged to the guillotine as a reward for the colossal effrontery with which he had played fast and loose with the lives and property of his fellow-men, when the chance of taking a hand in yet another crime—or rather series of crimes—most opportunely enabled him to cheat his enemies and made him a popular hero into the bargain.

In less than two years, from August 10, 1792, to July 27, 1794, he became rich, powerful and popular. How did he achieve it? Not by any merit of his own, not by attainments, courage, industry, integrity or moral worth. On the contrary, he owed his rise in fortune to very different causes—he owed it to falsehood, envy, hatred, servility and flattery in its basest form.

Here was a man who had brought to the scaffold some

of his most illustrious fellow-countrymen, a man who had played his part as a Terrorist, and behold the people bowed down before him and hailed him with shouts of joyful gratitude. Henceforth, as in Theresia's case, his presumption knew no bounds, and their joint careers of crime and flaunting luxury were welded together by a vanity that was common to them both.

On the 12th Thermidor, however, there existed no indissoluble bond of union between Tallien and la belle Cabarrus. She could, had she listed, have bade him farewell for ever, and innumerable suitors would have been ready to make her not merely their mistress but their wife. There were members of the Convention eager to fling themselves at her feet, generals of the republican armies, ex-proconsuls (such as Barras or Fréron), successful stockjobbers, men who had grown as rich as Croesus by despoiling the nation, revolutionary financiers, nay, even members of noble houses were ready—so extravagant was their gratitude—to give her their protection and even their name, all because, by a vagary of popular enthusiasm, she was regarded as the living symbol of the forces which put an end to the Reign of Terror.

Tallien's position in regard to Theresia was, on the other hand, widely different. Although he had flourished his dagger and had won the reputation of overthrowing the Tyrant, the Thermidorian legend insisted on portraying him as simply an instrument in the hands of another. His arm had been nerved to the deed by the "Libératrice de la France"; it was for love of her that he had dealt the blow.

We may here remark that the remainder of the Thermidorians were by no means as yet easy in their minds regarding the possible consequences of their act. Indeed they hurriedly embarked on a policy of reaction for which more than one of them were destined to pay dear. They

were then in no mood to envy Tallien his popularity, for they regarded it as ephemeral and fraught with greater danger than in reality proved to be the case. Nevertheless, they derived satisfaction from minimising the importance of Tallien's achievement by indulging in exaggerated panegyrics of Theresia. To have acknowledged that the credit for the Tyrant's overthrow was due to Tallien and to Tallien alone would have been to lessen their own importance, while on the other hand they had everything to gain from the abstract glorification of an act of passionate devotion. They, and they alone, could have smothered the infant fairy-tale at its birth. As it was, they not only agreed to hold their peace but they were actually at pains to nourish and strengthen the nursling legend to the best of their power, with the result that Tallien began to feel that his glory was waning and that he was being thrust as it were to the back of the stage. He realised that within a week his fame would be extinguished if Theresia threw him over—hence the alliance which his instinct told him he must bring about. As to how that alliance was effected we have no explicit evidence—not a word was ever uttered by either of the parties concerned. They were too deeply interested in keeping "mum" on the point. Yet one need not be a very subtle psychologist to reconstruct the process which brought about their union.

They were but actors, or marionettes rather, in a play for whose authorship the public were alone responsible, and like puppets they had, willy nilly, to play the parts allotted to them.

Tallien hurried off to La Petite Force to set his mistress free because the public would have adjudged him a criminal had he suffered her to remain in prison. He must needs be the first to acquaint her with the legend of the 9th Thermidor, colouring the story as suited him best. He could not have confessed to Theresia that

the story was utterly false. Her vanity would have been too sorely wounded. But he could at least say that he had made his love for her a pretext for precipitating a step the riskiness of which was continually being increased by the timidity and procrastination of his friends. He could say that, with the idea of hurrying on the dénouement, he had invented the story of the dagger, the missives weighted with stones and even the letters which we have reproduced on pages 27 and 28 of this volume.

If we read these letters again and interpret them in the light of our present conclusions we shall note that the epistle dated "La Force, 7th Thermidor," is not only written in a style utterly unlike Theresia's but that, in conception, it is typically and essentially masculine. The brusque directness of the opening sentences, the official tone, the technical exactitude of the terms, the economy of phrase, all unmistakably bespeak the man and the Conventionnel. "The Chief Commissioner of Police," so the missive runs, "has just left. He came to inform me that I am to be brought up for trial, that is to say for execution, to-morrow." Not one woman in ten thousand would have expressed herself in that way, and Theresia was the last word in femininity. On the other hand, the passage which follows does possibly betray evidence of collaboration. "Very different was the dream that I dreamed last night. Robespierre it seemed was no more and the prison doors had been flung wide . . . but thanks to your signal cowardice there will soon be no one left in France capable of bringing that dream to pass." Tallien was under no necessity to invent the sentence, "Robespierre was no more and the prison doors had been flung wide," to construct this "dream"—he merely had to antedate the events that had actually occurred on the 12th. The letter concluded with language just as masculine and, above all, just as

official, as that of the introduction. It would never have entered Theresia's head to employ such phrases.

As they drove along the streets from the prison, Tallien no doubt explained the comedy he had had to play and the story he had invented to delude his colleagues. He read over to Theresia rough drafts of the letters they would have to write and pretend had really been sent. But is it not extremely probable that, besides all this, he simulated a re-awakening of his love for Theresia and that he carried out his rôle to its natural conclusion by declaring that the tale he had told his colleagues was true at least in part, that, despite his fits of jealousy, he had never ceased to love Theresia, and it was only when he thought that she was lost to him for ever that he realised to the full how deep his passion was? Theresia was lovely enough and had a sufficiently high opinion of her own allurements to absorb the tale, and, if she did absorb it, she would be the less difficult to hold.

According to the popular account, it was she who had nerved Tallien to attack Robespierre. How then could she repudiate a love which had been the motive force of so great an achievement without incurring the adverse judgment of the public?

The necessities of the situation must have imposed these tactics on Tallien, and he was doubtless compelled to play the lover to the woman on whom, as a matter of fact, he had never bestowed a thought when the nightmare of the Terror was upon him.

As for Theresia, she could at last breathe freely again. The blade of death no longer hung over her head; she was free; she beheld the light of heaven once more!

Light and Life had come again, and the future stretched out long and alluringly before her; in her ears a man was singing the high descant of love—how could she be expected to reflect, to analyse? What time had she for doubt? For a brief moment she had recognised that

Tallien might, if he so willed, avenge himself for her unfaithfulness by compassing her death, and now behold, he had come to set her free ! How then could she help believing him ?

If he gained this initial aim—and everything points to his having done so—Tallien had but to watch over his mistress unceasingly in order to retain her. If only he kept on telling her not “ it is you ” or “ it is we ” whom they are acclaiming but “ the love with which you inspired me, the love which gave me strength to cast down the tyrant ” ; if only he could sufficiently impress upon her this essential part of the legend, Theresia would be bound to believe that her triumph was inseparably connected with the story of her love for Tallien.

If moreover Tallien painted in glowing colours his prospects of attaining supreme power in the Republic, there was nothing to prevent her crediting the story, so genuinely great was the popularity he now enjoyed. That he did in fact make her the confidante of his hopes and plans can scarcely be doubted since he regarded himself, at all events during the first phase of the Thermidorian reaction, as destined to fill Robespierre’s place at the head of affairs, and that with advantage. He had a seat on the Committee of Public Safety and he was wealthy, though not so wealthy as, being unaccustomed to riches, he led himself to imagine. He deemed therefore that nothing was beyond his reach.

The day was to come when Theresia would learn how she had been duped and misled, how she had been made a tool of ; but it would then be too late to cast him off. The intimacy of her relationship with him would have been too long and too publicly displayed, she would have too long accepted and amplified the beneficent rôle of Notre Dame de Thermidor assigned to her in the popular legend, to disavow her soi-disant lover.

We may take it then that as Tallien came away from La

Petite Force with his mistress he poured a tale of love into her too credulous ears. Still, though Theresia hearkened to his declarations and did in part believe them, they made no vow never to separate again, since a few months later we find them living apart preparatory to entering on the married state.

On the 12th Thermidor there was nothing to compel them to study appearances, nothing to conceal from the world, for their liaison, their love, their passion had already passed into history. Nevertheless, though there was no obstacle to their living together, they separated that day or very shortly afterwards, for in a letter dated August 18, 1794, which Theresia wrote to a friend in Bordeaux, she speaks of being about to remove her residence to No. 9 rue Saint Georges, Chaussée d'Antin.

The pair were legally married towards the end of 1794, and Theresia was then still living in the Chaussée d'Antin, a highly fashionable part of the town, while Tallien had not forsaken his quarters in the rue de la Perle. If they had not decided on legalising their position by the beginning of August they must have resolved on the step in October or November at the latest.

It has been generally assumed that the determining factor in the case was the approaching birth of Theresia's second child, Thermidor Rose Theresia. This supposition has much to be said for it, but unfortunately the official record of the child's birth has never been discovered and it is impossible to tell at what precise date in 1795 she made her entry into the world. The significance of her first Christian name, Thermidor, appears obvious, and affords strong presumptive evidence that her conception was connected with the events of that historic month. The child could not have been the fruit of the concluding intimacies between Tallien and Theresia in the Gironde, for in this case the birth would have taken place in 1794. The act of conception must necessarily be assigned to a

date prior to the first fortnight in May or subsequent to the 12th Thermidor. We know, however, that when Theresia came to Paris her relations with Tallien were characterised by considerable coolness, and that her travelling companion, Jean Guéry, was occupying a great deal of her attention. We may therefore legitimately infer that the circumstances were scarcely favourable to the begetting of Rose Thermidor. On the other hand, when Theresia had been released from prison and Tallien was simulating a revival of his passion, he might well have been the cause of those disquieting symptoms which must have been perceived by Theresia in September or at the latest in October following, symptoms which led them to decide on the marriage which eventually took place in December. If this assumption is correct Rose Thermidor would have first beheld the light in April 1795. Tallien had to accept responsibility for other children with which Madame Tallien presented him, but while for this dubious progeny he never evinced any feelings save those of the most absolute indifference, he invariably regarded Rose Thermidor as his own offspring and treated her accordingly, continuing, long after his divorce, to take a practical interest in her welfare. The only explanation of this fact is that he had good reasons for not doubting the legitimacy of her birth. Before her incarceration in La Petite Force, Theresia had given entertainment to so many rivals that he could not but have harboured grave doubts as to his own part in the production of any resultant child, and, at the end of 1794, Theresia's relations with the opposite sex were so numerous and of such a nature that similar misgivings would have been bound to arise in his mind. The interval which immediately followed Robespierre's fall and which endured no more than two or three months was, then, the only period of his alleged amours during which he could have safely

regarded himself as the exclusive possessor of the fair Theresia.

The Terrorist, then, having delivered his mistress from the hands of her captors did not proceed to live with her, but continued to keep on his rooms in the rue de la Perle, unless, as is more likely, he simply lodged with his parents.*

The charges which the Tyrant had indirectly levelled against him in connexion with the robberies which he had committed at Tours and Bordeaux still seemed to echo in his ears. Robespierre himself was dead, but the Jacobin party, though scotched, was not killed. It was more than possible that the charges levelled by the fallen divinity might be taken up by his worshippers in order to avenge him at the expense of his most conspicuous assassin. The moment therefore was not opportune for Tallien to make a parade of the wealth his brigandage had brought him. He consequently decided to stay on in the rue de la Perle, but he rented a suite of apartments for his mistress in the vicinity of the Chaussée d'Antin, and there she remained until December or even later. We may assume that it was a very elegant establishment, for Theresia, whom the Thermidorian legend had made the cynosure of all eyes, would not have put up with anything of an inferior description. She knew her lover was rolling in money, and would have had no compunction about asking him for a setting worthy of her beauty. Tallien in his rôle of fond lover could hardly refuse her request, and the fact that a mistress kept in luxury would be something to brag about, no doubt made him the more readily compliant. Moreover he could share in the enjoyment by the simple expedient of spending the majority of his time at her abode rather than at his own.

* His father may have been dead, but his mother was still alive, because in the yarns he told about the letters which he sent to Theresia in La Petite Force he made out that his mother had assisted him in the business.

As a matter of fact it was only in times of danger and when his life was threatened that Tallien's innate selfishness gained the upper hand of him. At all other times vanity ruled his conduct and he would scatter his money broadcast.

Only men accustomed to riches are able to employ their wealth with moderation, and this condition is necessarily lacking in people who become rich suddenly, whether by inheritance, speculation or some unlooked-for turn of fortune. Gamblers and speculators are generally spendthrifts. With them it is usually "lightly come and lightly go," and so it was with Tallien. Unforeseen events, which however seemed at that time almost certain to repeat themselves, had raised him in the space of less than two years from poverty to wealth.

Compared with the manner in which he had lived until 1792, his position in 1794 must have appeared to him one of inexhaustible opulence, and we shall see that he drew the more readily on his resources in that he believed himself able to replenish them at will. And as soon as he deemed that the time had arrived when he might safely dispense with the precaution of curtailing the luxury of his style of living, we shall see that the very considerable sum represented by the proceeds of his nefarious practices at Bordeaux and Tours was no long time in slipping through his fingers. Meanwhile he dressed Theresia, and fitted up her apartments, on an extremely lavish scale. It was now doubtless that he presented her with some of the jewellery of which she afterwards made such a show at her receptions at la Chaumière, though for the present she kept it in the background, it being her cue, as it was Tallien's, to pretend to be in somewhat straitened circumstances. Moreover, from the 12th Thermidor to the date of her installation in the Chaussée d'Antin, both the lovers were busily occupied ; Theresia probably had

to see about getting back the things she had packed up to take with her before her arrest occurred. This would have meant visits to Versailles. Her change of plans would also have necessitated her going to Fontenay aux Roses. However these journeys did not prevent her from showing herself in public leaning on Tallien's arm wherever the vanity of the "Vanquisher of Tyranny" prompted him to display himself in company with his celebrated Egeria. The Tuileries, the Champs Elysées, the Palais Royal and the theatre saw them almost every day, and their popularity grew apace.

The Terrorist's first act was to call for stern measures against his foes and such as had it in their power to work him ill. Solicitude for his own safety made him one of the most violent advocates of further executions. Nevertheless, his frequent contact with the general public soon made him sensible of the fact that, gladly as men would have beheld the extermination of the Robespierrists, they were still more anxious to witness the inauguration of a policy of clemency and forbearance.

He therefore gave his vote with the majority of the Convention, which undertook at this time an important series of measures of a pacificatory nature, notable among which was the resolution to release a number of persons imprisoned by order of the vanquished party. This latter decree was dated the 18th Thermidor (August 5, 1794), and from the 20th (August 7) onward the newspapers began to make mention of the visits paid by Tallien and other delegates to the prisons, where they set a large number of persons at liberty. Among those who found themselves restored to freedom were the actors and actresses of the Comédie Française, who had given themselves up for lost. Theresia's lover was instrumental in bringing about the release of La Harpe, and the latter, whose gratitude to the representative for his merciful action was quickened by his horrible dread of the scaffold,

subsequently became an assiduous frequenter of Madame Tallien's reunions at la Chaumière.

On the 23rd Thermidor (August 10, 1794)—the anniversary of the massacre at the Tuileries—the *Gazette historique et politique de la France et de l'Europe* contained an account of a further visit paid by the Septembriseur to the Luxembourg prison. A dense throng consisting of the relatives and friends of the prisoners and of ordinary sightseers were on the look-out for Tallien and gave him a great ovation as he passed along the rue de Tournon.*

The Butcher of Bordeaux must have been visited by a pang of regret at having to make a free gift of their liberty to such a multitude of people from whom in other circumstances he would not have failed to exact a ransom. Possibly, however, the huzzahs of the crowd brought him some consolation for the vexation he must have felt at being compelled to let slip such "golden" opportunities. Be that as it may, the event increased his popularity to such an extent that a day or two afterwards papers such as the *Messenger du Soir* and the *Journal de Perlet*, voicing the jealous feelings of his colleagues of the Convention, began to comment with acerbity on the ovations of which Tallien had been the object. They remarked that it was unbecoming for a single Representative to be regarded as the sole author of measures the credit for which belonged to the Convention as a whole, and proceeded to observe that such demonstrations might easily

* "Vive la Convention ! Vivent nos dignes représentants ! Such were the shouts which filled the air in the rue de Tournon yesterday when Tallien went to the Luxembourg to set free a number of patriots who were being wrongfully detained there. Immense crowds had hurried to the spot, heaped blessings upon him and embraced him and the liberated prisoners as well. 'Be of good heart, my friends,' said Tallien to those whose release he had as yet been unable to procure, 'the freedom you are sighing for will soon be yours ; only the guilty will be denied this boon. I shall be here again to-day, I shall be here again to-morrow, and we will labour night and day until all those patriots who are suffering wrongful imprisonment are restored to their families,'" &c. &c. *Gazette historique et politique de la France et de l'Europe*.

place the individual to whom they were wrongfully addressed in an uncomfortably false position with regard to his colleagues.

There is no document extant from which we can learn whether Theresia took advantage of the temper of the times to obtain the release of the servants who had been imprisoned at the same time as herself. What we do know, however, is that she availed herself of the opportunity to intercede with Tallien on behalf of young Guéry, who had borne her company on the journey from Bordeaux to Paris, since he was at large again on August 18. It was in fact at this date that she sent the following letter, to which we have already made allusion, to her friend Constance Lavaud at Bordeaux.

“ Paris this 1st of Fructidor,

“ Year II of the Republic.

“ I have no misgivings, my Constance, regarding the reality of your friendship, and I feel sure that adversity has not caused it to wane. To harbour such a thought would be to do you a grievous wrong, and I have sufficient sense of justice to judge of your feelings by my own. I never had a thought for myself when innocent people were suffering unjustly. Of that your husband is a living proof, and in him I surely possess a partisan. I am greatly indebted to you for all the care you have taken of my belongings. I agree with you that as many things as possible should be sold, my guitars, my mahogany paper-racks, my orange trees and my horse and cabriolet. I gratefully accept Citoyen Louvet's offer. Tell him I am deeply touched by his kindness and that I shall write to thank him by the first opportunity. How I miss my orange trees, my balcony—and yours! Yet it will be some long time before your city beholds me again. Sell one of those walnut caskets. I am sorry not to be able to get rid of some of my dresses, for my two months in

prison have cost me horribly dear. Joseph should have two bottles of oil which Guéry gave me before I left. Do please send me at once some wine, sugar, coffee, tea and candles—these things I simply must have. Gramont has come with 3200 livres, which will pay Sicard's account here. I imagine that when my things are sold Awson will have all the money he wants ; anyhow, Guéry will be starting in four or five days and he will be bringing some more.

“ I would rather everything came by diligence or messenger—the carriers are such an endless time on the road. Citoyen Ysabeau has promised to make things all right for me with the officials, so apply to him, dear, for any permits you may require. As regards the smaller things, you could send them whenever an opportunity occurs by any one who is coming to Paris. Possibly they wouldn't mind taking charge of small parcels such as these would be, and it would mean so much saved ; but I look to you to do everything as cheaply as you can.

“ I won't write a great deal now, but I must tell you that Fontenay has behaved shockingly to me.

“ I had some soap ; will you send that along too ? I should like 500 livres' worth of sugar and coffee, carriage paid, and a similar quantity of oil, tea and soap. I leave everything in your hands, dearest, and I am quite sure you will do your best all round.

“ I ought to mention that the guitar cost me 96 livres. Gratitude being always hard to express I will not send any messages to your mother, father or husband, for I know that you, Constance dear, are assured of its liveness, its sincerity and its durability, in which characteristics it resembles the friendship which I have sworn always to entertain for you.

“ THERESIA CABARRUS.”

“ P.S. Tallien, who is very fond of you, sends his most

affectionate regards. Be a wise woman and don't say anything to your husband. Serenity is now depicted on every countenance. 'Long live the Republic and down with all factions and faction-mongers!'—such is the prayer of one of their victims. This is a random scrawl, but I am busy changing houses and have scarcely time for anything. Write to me at 9 rue Saint Georges, Chaussée d'Antin."

Despite the affection which we are quite willing to believe Theresia entertained for Constance Lavaud, she here gave no other manifestation of it than was conveyed by a series of commonplace affirmations and the reminder of a service rendered to her husband. "I do you the justice to judge of your heart by my own," that is to say; "I have as much heart as you," a mere unsupported statement. Then after asking Madame Lavaud to do her a multitude of favours she comes to that long and complicated passage about the difficulty of putting one's gratitude into suitable words, how for that reason she abstained from sending any messages to Madame Lavaud's mother, father and husband, and how she was quite sure that her Constance never doubted its liveliness and sincerity, qualities which marked the affection she had sworn always to entertain for her. Words, words, words; mere empty protestations, nothing more!

Despite all her talk of love and gratitude, she had never a word of real tenderness or affection for her friend: she never even asked whether she and her family were well. Of course it is just possible that she had recently had good news from her friend and that she could therefore dispense with any inquiries on the subject. Her allusion to a letter she had lately received from Madame Lavaud recommending her to sell the things she had left behind at Bordeaux as well as the commissions she asked her to perform may imply the

belief that her Constance was in good health. Nevertheless, throughout the whole of the letter, and it is not a short one, we look in vain for any indication that she troubled herself in the slightest degree concerning Madame Lavaud and her affairs, her joys and sorrows, her pleasures and vexations.

Apart from the hollow protestations of friendship which we have quoted, her letter is simply full of herself and her own affairs. All this confirms the remarks made by us at the beginning of this work concerning the predominant influence of selfishness upon her character. Her own ego was the ruling factor of her whole life.

On the 1st Fructidor, Year II (August 18, 1794), twenty days after her release from prison, she was still to some extent under the influence of the terrors which had weighed upon her during her incarceration in La Petite Force, for we find her obviously anxious that her enthusiasm for the Republic should not be called in question at Bordeaux.

In all probability Madame Lavaud had told her in the letter to which the above-quoted effusion of Theresia's was a reply, that she had heard of her arrest but that she did not despair of seeing justice done to her. It would be a perfectly natural thing to say to one who had been set at liberty and whose very arrest implied that she must have come under suspicion. "I knew you had been put in prison but I did not therefore believe that you were really guilty." To this Theresia replied, "I have no misgivings, Constance dear, regarding your friendship, and I feel sure that adversity [she ought of course to have said "my adversity"] has never caused it to waver," which, being interpreted, means "I have been a victim of tyranny and not a disloyal citizen."

We may reasonably infer that a few days after her release Theresia wrote to Madame Lavaud telling her how she had been imprisoned at Robespierre's orders and

how she had been rescued by Tallien, and that it was to this first letter that her friend Constance had replied saying that she had never doubted her innocence. Nevertheless, in the postscript of her letter Theresia betrays the anxiety that still consumed her to be regarded as a staunch Republican, for she adds, "Serenity is depicted on every countenance. Long live the Republic and down with all factions and faction-mongers—such is the prayer of one of their victims." That reads as if it had been dictated by the very spirit of the revolution—or else by Tallien. Theresia could not have genuinely felt a word of it.

We have considered it incumbent upon us to dwell on the marked anxiety displayed by Tallien's mistress to emphasise her "Republicanism" because it reflects, as it were, the terrors she had recently undergone and is connected with her desire to conceal the prosperity which accrued to her from her lover's popularity, his wealth and the popular fairy tale in which she played the delightful rôle of Notre Dame de Thermidor.

"I am vexed," she says, "at not being able to sell some of my dresses, for my two months of prison have cost me horribly dear." Further on Theresia asks her friend to send her various little things she had left behind her at Bordeaux, things which she did not want to sell, by any one who might happen to be going to Paris. "It would be money saved," she adds, "and I look to you to manage everything as cheaply as possible." Then our fair perverter of the truth proceeds to make charges against her husband in terms which, though probably not altogether devoid of truth, were no doubt exaggerated to suit her purpose.

Nevertheless, thanks to Tallien's secret resources, Theresia in August 1794 was in no such straits as she would have us believe, since she installed herself in highly elegant style in the most fashionable quarter in Paris.

Moreover, even before her arrest, on May 30, she could not have been so dreadfully poor, since she had arranged to take a house at Chaillot and had the workmen there fitting it up or enlarging it according to her own designs. On the other hand it is possible that, being deprived of some of her income and unable to sell her Paris property save at a ruinous sacrifice, she was entirely dependent upon Tallien for support. If this were the case, we can understand that she decided to get rid of the things which she had left behind her at Bordeaux and which were not worth the cost of transport—furniture, plants, guitars, horse and cabriolet.

These sales and the requests addressed by Theresia to Madame Lavaud regarding household provisions cause Monsieur Pellet some surprise. "No one," he exclaims, "would ever have imagined that Notre Dame de Thermidor was so thrifty a housewife." The assumption was erroneous. Towards the end of her life such a description of her might have been justified, but neither before the Revolution, nor during the Terror, nor even in the days of the Directoire, could she have ever been accurately described as a "thrifty housewife." This much her extravagant folly sufficiently proclaims.

There is nothing remarkable about her agreeing, on Madame Lavaud's advice, to sell things which she could not cause to be sent to her in Paris, but the tone of her reply distinctly suggests a woman who was desirous of avoiding the impression of wealth or of being in easy circumstances. She sanctioned and approved the measures suggested to her, but these measures did not originate with her and, swiftly growing weary of the whole business, she says, "Anyhow, I look to you to do everything as cheaply as you can."

As to the provisions which Theresia was so anxious to have sent to her at the earliest possible moment and concerning the transport of which she went into great

detail, the terrible scarcity of food then prevalent in Paris is sufficient to explain the matter without our being compelled to credit her with domestic virtues quite out of keeping with her nature. It was not in obedience to the dictates of economy that Notre Dame de Thermidor expressed a desire for five hundred livres' (francs) worth of sugar and coffee and the same amount of oil, tea, soap, wine and candles; it was simply because these commodities were unobtainable in the capital. The Revolution had ruined the industries which produced them.*

As long ago as the end of 1793 the price of wines and brandies had almost doubled, sugar was nearly five times as dear, one candle now cost as much as seven.†

This outrageous state of affairs went on growing worse until after the fall of Robespierre. Towards the end of 1794 some improvement was brought about by the abolition of the tariff regulating the prices at which goods had to be sold. Any breach of this measure, which was literally crushing agricultural and industrial activity out of existence, was punished with the utmost severity. In the beginning of 1795, however, the alarming and continuously progressive decrease in the value of assignats ‡ was the means of bringing about a renewal of the famine.

The requests for provisions which Theresia sent in her letter to Madame Lavaud are consequently no evidence of thrift. They simply imply that she was in want of sugar, coffee, wine, oil, tea, soap and candles, and that she and Tallien were anxious to supply that want at all

* The famine that prevailed during the Revolution was not due to natural causes. On page 29 of the second volume of Mallet du Pan's *Memoirs* we read as follows: "The last harvest was good throughout France generally, and in some provinces excellent. I have seen a summary of two returns relating to 27 departments, and they show an increase of 15, 20, 30 and 35 thousand setiers of grain over last year. There is therefore no real famine."

† Taine, "Les Origines de la France," vol. viii, p. 241.

‡ They lost 81 per cent. of their value at the close of 1794.

costs. "I imagine," she says, "that when my things are sold Awson [who was Awson: agent, purveyor, domestic or what?] will have enough money; anyhow, Guéry is starting in four or five days and he will bring some more." The unconcern with which Theresia throws in this latter piece of information shows that money was not scarce with her. We learn from this passage that young Guéry had regained his freedom since he was starting for Bordeaux four or five days later. His liberation ought to have accompanied Theresia's as a natural consequence, but the release of suspects did not invariably follow so normal a course, not even after the decree of the 18th Thermidor, which provided that all prisoners whose guilt was not thoroughly established should be set at liberty.

We learn from a report of General Boulanger, who suffered death with Robespierre on the 10th Thermidor, that young Guéry had been shut up in the Luxembourg prison, and the journals of the day inform us that it was Tallien and no other who was entrusted with the duty of visiting this particular house of detention and freeing the prisoners entitled to release. It was to Tallien therefore that not only La Harpe but Guéry as well was indebted for his restoration to freedom. This fact is not a little remarkable since it is equally certain that on the 31st of the preceding May, Tallien himself had signed the order for his incarceration. We have pointed out in this connexion that Robespierre no doubt endeavoured to persuade Tallien to set his seal on his mistress's condemnation by signing the warrant for her imprisonment, and that to induce him to put his hand to this disreputable piece of business he swore that she was playing him false yet once again, this time with young Guéry. We have also explained how, in our opinion, Tallien managed to avoid the snare without, however, refusing to sign the order for Guéry's arrest.

Nevertheless, when we consider the delicacy of the situation in which he was placed at the time with regard to Theresia, it is clear that his consent to Guéry's incarceration could only have been given by him in a momentary fit of jealous passion, for although the fact of his countenancing the imprisonment of her youthful companion—lover if you will—did not involve a direct condemnation of the ex-Madame de Fontenay, it was not precisely a testimonial in her favour.

We may, then, take it that Tallien would not have released Guéry on the 23rd Thermidor (August 10, 1794)—a week before Theresia's letter to Madame Lavaud announcing the young man's approaching return to Bordeaux—unless she had intervened in his favour. How this intervention came about, whether Tallien in his anxiety to hear his mistress clear herself from suspicion was the origin of it or whether Theresia herself volunteered an apologia must always remain in doubt. Whichever way it was, however, the arguments she employed may be pretty readily imagined. Jean Guéry was a fine boy and a forward one for his age, still, he was but fourteen, and Theresia would have made fine capital out of that fact in the course of an indignant repudiation of Robespierre's "slanders." She had, peradventure, sufficient cleverness to impress on Tallien that he had no business to suspect her of infidelity with such a great hobbledehoy; in the first place because there was no truth in the charge and in the second because he could do himself nothing but harm by avowing the slightest belief in such accusations, seeing how closely Robespierre's fall was associated in the popular belief with their own supposed idyllic love for each other.

Instead of persisting in his charges against the boy, a mere child to whose imprisonment he ought never to have given his consent, instead of doing anything to bedim the glory of Notre Dame de Thermidor, he would

be far better employed in setting to work to obtain the "gamin's" release. It was his duty to free the boy as he had freed her and thus finally refute the slanderous accusations that had been brought against her by Robespierre and Boulanger.

Tallien was convinced—or pretended to be—and gave Guéry his liberty. But though Theresia had pleaded his cause, she contrived to pack him off without delay to Bordeaux, availing herself of his gratitude to entrust him with a variety of commissions.

As to the nature of Citoyen Louvet's offer of which mention is made by Theresia in her letter, we know nothing and can conjecture nothing, which is a pity, for, judging by Theresia's lavish expressions of gratitude, the matter was of some importance. To bring this analysis to a conclusion, we learn from the request for the two bottles of oil "that Joseph should have," that the said Joseph was still at Bordeaux where our youthful *divorcée* had left him to look after her little boy. Little Antoine Fontenay was still down there in the Gironde, yet Theresia never so much as mentions him in her letter to Madame Lavaud. From the Memoirs of the Comte de Paroy we know there was a brief period during his mother's imprisonment when the poor child was without the very means of existence. It is to be hoped that his mother thought of him before August 18. At any rate it would be interesting to know whether, when Madame Lavaud went to see Joseph about the two bottles of oil, she told him that she had had a letter from his mistress which did not contain the barest allusion to her son.

Things were on the whole going pretty well for Tallien, yet he had his trials. The famous dagger scene of the 9th Thermidor had brought him to the very forefront. The Dictator's fall had relieved him of the incubus of terror by which he had been beset, and not only that,

it had won him popularity. But there was another side to the picture. It had been necessary to modify the composition and curtail the powers of the Committees of Public Safety and General Surety ; similar treatment had been dealt out to the Tribunal Révolutionnaire. The Commune had been hacked to pieces by the guillotine and it had not been set up again. The attitude of the vanquished Jacobins was one of irreconcilable hostility. Last, but not least, the dole that had been served out daily to the rabble that filled the sections howling their raucous approval of every deed perpetrated by the chief of those forty-eight hotbeds of anarchy was no longer forthcoming. Thus a howling, hungry, idle mob of the most blackguardly ruffians of the capital, the human scum to whom Tallien had made his appeal at the outset of his political career, was suddenly let loose on the streets of Paris.

Bewildered and frenzied, this army of hooligans betook themselves to the Jacobin club, where they yelled out curses against the Thermidorian reactionaries and principally against the Representatives responsible for the coup of the 9th. In no long time their hostility began to take more definite shape, and it was Tallien that had to bear the brunt of it. At the Jacobin Club he was charged with having engineered Robespierre's overthrow in order to put himself in his place.

At the Convention his name was bandied about by his adversaries in connexion with an alleged plot which it was stated was to come to a head on the 10th Fructidor. He was called upon to give an account of the matter. Five days later, feeling that his colleagues on the Committee of Public Safety looked on him with no favourable eye, he ascended the tribune of the Convention and announced his intention to resign. No one protested.

At the Jacobin Club, we are told by Arsène Houssaye, he was violently attacked by Levasseur.

“ Let Tallien tell us the truth about his liaisons. Ask him how he stands with regard to the wife of a certain émigré, daughter of the Treasurer of the King of Spain.” Tallien took up the challenge. “ I am called upon for an explanation which I am not at all sure that I ought to give. Immured in one of the Paris prisons lay a victim of Robespierre—a woman. This woman had refused to sign a denunciation against me stating that I had planned to escape from Bordeaux and set sail for America on a frigate with six million francs on board. I applied for her release to the Committee of General Surety who did not so much as suffer me to finish my speech, but gave me the necessary order then and there, so thoroughly convinced were they of the justice of my demand.” *

It is worthy of note that the Terrorist here claims to have obtained Theresia’s release without any difficulty from the Committee of General Surety. This is interesting, as it affords a refutation out of Tallien’s own mouth of the Princesse de Chimay’s story, which was that Tallien had to procure himself a seat on the Committee of Public Safety to obtain her freedom.

It was at the Jacobin Club too that Carrier—who had not co-operated in the anti-Robespierrist plot because he had been absent from Paris at the time of its inception—endeavoured to create a following for himself by delivering himself of utterances derogatory to his colleague. “ Tallien,” said he, “ has always been crying out for justice. It’s very much like a thorough-paced rascal going about telling everybody that he’s an honest man—like Satan rebuking Sin ! ”

It was in vain that our pseudo-hero attempted to defend himself. The sansculottes of the sections whose influence was then paramount in the club had condemned him in advance, for he had been instrumental in depriving

* “ Notre Dame de Thermidor,” pp. 395-396.



Tallien

Tallien

JEAN LAMBERT TALLIEN
From a lithograph by Delpech

them of their subsidies. His name was erased from the register together with those of Lecointre and Fréron.

All this latent opposition and open hostility culminated on the 23rd Fructidor, Year II, in the attempted assassination of Tallien, an event which *L'Orateur du Peuple* recounts in the following terms :

“About half an hour after midnight yesterday as Tallien was returning home from his mother's residence he was attacked in the rue des Quatre Fils by a ruffian who fired several shots at him with a pistol, and cried as he threw himself upon his victim, ‘You blackguard you, I've been on the look-out for you for a long while.’ Tallien fell to the ground in a pool of blood. His assailant had aimed at his heart, but his victim by a sudden turn defeated the object of the hired assassin, who took to his heels and threw away his weapon as he ran.

“The report of firearms roused all the citizens of the section, whose tears and sympathy accompanied this fresh martyr to the cause of liberty even to his bed of pain. Piercing his coat, waistcoat and shirt, the bullet had inflicted an ugly wound in the victim's left shoulder. Owing to several blows in the chest delivered with the butt end of the pistol, the wounded man experienced difficulty in breathing, and he was bled three times. Let us hope that the people will not be deprived of one of their bravest and most upright defenders.”

The following extract is from the *Courrier Républicain* of the 26th Fructidor :

“People are talking and thinking of nothing save the attempted assassination of the Representative Tallien. Every one gives his views about the matter after his own style, but it is pretty evident that the generality of people are taking the liveliest interest in the fate of this fearless deputy.”

In the *Gazette Française* of the same day we read :

“The attempted assassination of the Representative

Tallien is the topic of eager conversation, although those knots of excited disputants who in the days of the Revolution were wont to turn the city's open spaces and promenades into so many political battle-grounds are no longer to be seen. Nevertheless, people are apparently taking the greatest interest in the fate of the man who was the first to show himself brave enough to defy Robespierre."

Lastly, the *Orateur du Peuple* inserted the following note in its issue of the 27th Fructidor :

" From the unanimous reports of the hospital authorities it appears that the Representative of the People Tallien is not going to gratify his would-be assassins by succumbing this time. Some clues to the affair are forthcoming. On the night of the assault and at no great distance from the spot at which the attack was made the police arrested an individual whom they conveyed to the Section de l'Indivisibilité. Questioned regarding his abode, he burst into tears and gave an address which proved to be false. He stated that he was employed by a wall-paper manufacturer, and from information which he himself volunteered, it seems that he was until quite recently working for Arthur, the well-known supporter of Robespierre, who suffered death on the scaffold with the recalcitrant members of the Commune. This throws considerable light on the matter, and we shall doubtless soon learn that the attack owed its origin to the Robespierrist faction, which, as everybody knows, has changed nothing but its name." *

Was the assault a genuine one or was it a bogus affair ? From the prominence which the *Orateur du Peuple* gave to the incident, and the manner in which it followed it up, we are inclined to think it was genuine. Nevertheless, some few of Tallien's contemporaries have hinted

* The same note appeared in the *Journal de Perlet* of the 29th Fructidor.

that no convincing evidence was forthcoming. We mention this fact, though without laying much stress on it, because no real light on the subject is to be had. At the same time, it is certainly true that Tallien's popularity was decidedly quickened by this attempt upon his life which, whether it was genuine or not, took place at the very moment when the Jacobins were most bitter in their denunciations. We may also recall the fact that it was less than a year ago that he had been made the object of a similar attack in Bordeaux, the genuineness of which we have already called in question. Certainly the people of Bordeaux did not regard it in a very serious light.

In Paris no doubt was entertained regarding the genuineness of the incident. There Tallien was looked upon as the hero who had put an end to the Reign of Terror, and he was accorded a reception whose brilliant character is best described in the language of an eye-witness, Pasquier the Chancellor.

"The man who is popularly credited with being the author of the reaction is Tallien. He it was who laid Robespierre low and put an end to the Reign of Terror. Through him the scaffolds were razed to the ground and the prison doors flung wide. In the face of so mighty a boon as that, the Past has melted away and France has forgotten the cruelties of the Proconsul who played the tyrant at Bordeaux, forgotten that he was one of the instigators of the September massacres and that he bore a hand in the murder of his King. Some feelings are so strong that they override or obliterate all others; and such is the case with the gratitude which is lavished upon this man.

"There was a report that an attempt had been made upon his life. After passing a few days in retirement—for what reason it is not exactly clear—he reappeared in public at the Odéon, and I was an eye-witness of the

scene. It had got about that he was coming, and everybody was on the look-out for him. Never was a theatre so densely packed. The auditorium was not large enough to contain the throng. They overflowed on to the staircases, which were as crowded as the parterre itself. At last he appeared. The enthusiasm and the applause are indescribable. The occupants of the boxes, the people in the pit, men and women alike, stood up on their chairs to look at him. It seemed as though they would never weary of gazing at him. He was young, rather good-looking, and his manner was calm and serene. Madame Tallien was at his side and shared his triumph. In her case also everything had been forgiven and forgotten. Similar scenes were enacted all through the autumn of that year. Never was any service, however great, rewarded by gratitude so lively and so touching. Never, one would have thought, could the memory of emotions so deep have faded from men's minds. Yet for years before his death (which occurred in 1820) Tallien, forsaken and alone, a prey to loathsome disease, dragged out a miserable existence in one of the obscurest parts of Paris. His features had grown hideous and repulsive, he had none to minister to his needs save an aged woman who alone remained loyal to him, and his only means of subsistence consisted of an exiguous allowance which, from sheer compassion, the King's government doled out to him. It was that he had again relapsed—at Quiberon and on the occasion of the 13th Vendémiaire—into the Tallien of the old days of 1792 and 1793. Providence had once deigned to make him the ignoble instrument of a noble end. That end achieved, she had cast him back again upon the human lumber heap.

“It was to the memory of the 9th Thermidor that he owed the permission to remain in France, whence all the regicides but he had been driven forth. I myself was

enabled some short time before his death to discharge a debt of gratitude for services which, in common with many others, I had received at his hands. It happened, for what reason I know not, that the allowance he had been receiving from the Government came to an end. I was informed of the fact, and supplied the deficiency and so lightened the distress of his last hours. Very touching were the expressions of gratitude which from his death bed he caused to be conveyed to me.” *

It is somewhat remarkable to hear a man like the Chancellor Pasquier speaking in such indulgent terms of the vilest butcher of the Revolution. But Pasquier was a brave and honourable man, and was anxious to show his gratitude for a service which he conceived the Septembriseur had rendered him through the agency of his mistress in the days when he and his wife had been in prison during the Terror. This is the story, as he himself relates it, of Theresia’s intervention on their behalf.

“We entered Saint Lazare, my wife and I, more or less resigned and indifferent to our fate. We had defended ourselves with courage and perseverance, but the day had gone against us and there was nothing for it but to accept the inevitable. After a month had gone by, however, and the prison doors which had been flung open for so many remained closed to us, when practically our only companions in captivity were the Terrorists who came to take the places of their victims, our hearts began to be filled with profound melancholy, and I know not how we should have borne up against it had our release, which came about after five or six weeks; been longer delayed. Many people, some of them highly influential, had bestirred themselves to secure our freedom. Thus Madame de Fontenay, who shortly afterwards became Madame Tallien, had been busy on our behalf, but so long as the men who had made up the

* “Mémoires du chancelier Pasquier,” pp. 113-115.

Committee of Surety prior to the great day remained in a majority it had been impossible to put an end to our captivity." *

These statements of Pasquier's have an additional interest for us, for they show that if the Terrorist enjoyed his popularity up to the end of 1794 he at all events did not possess sufficient interest with his colleagues even a short time after the 9th Thermidor to wring from them the release of a couple of suspects. It may have been that he did not display much eagerness in his representations on behalf of the Chancellor and his wife, seeing that as the moment was not favourable for practising his customary extortions he was not likely to reap anything tangible from their release. When we bear in mind how inordinately vain he was we can judge how keenly he must have suffered when, after Fructidor, he perceived the increasing tendency of the Committees and even of the Convention to boycott and ignore him. Such a state of affairs boded ill for the success of his ambition to fill Robespierre's place, for this was what he had hoped to do, not indeed on the 10th nor on the 11th Thermidor but quite possibly from the 12th to the 15th of that glorious month.

Too complete a nonentity to realise that what hindered his attainment to the supreme power in the State was much rather his own incompetence than the jealousy of his colleagues, he attributed their hostility solely to his own popularity. Nevertheless, that popularity was certainly insufficient to console him for such a disillusion ; whence we may legitimately infer that it was his cruel disappointment which in September or the latter days of August determined him to throw over the Republic that had dealt with him so falsely, for the sake of the Royalist cause. He must however have kept very quiet to Theresia concerning his vexations and his Royalist

* "Mémoires du chancelier Pasquier," p. 111.

leanings for fear of losing her support, now more necessary to him than ever for the realisation of his plans.

Happily la Cabarrus—who was still but a little over twenty-one—had her head too full of frivolities to harbour the suspicion that her lover was mixed up in political intrigues of which he was keeping her in ignorance. Delighted beyond measure with her new and elegant surroundings in the Chaussée d'Antin, where she was enabled to play the hostess to the friends she had made among Tallien's set, she took up her rôle of *Libératrice Nationale* with indescribable enthusiasm. She sat enthroned as Notre Dame de Thermidor, giving audiences to those who came to supplicate her intercession with a satisfaction that was enhanced by the fact that she ran no risk of being accused of bartering her good offices for cash, since the times no longer permitted her lover to obtain ransom from his protégés.

Deceived by the popular ovations of which Tallien was so frequently the object, misled by the eulogies which her adorers and suppliants bestowed upon her lover in order to conciliate her good graces, she naturally nourished all sorts of illusory hopes concerning the brilliant future that she deemed to be in store for her.

It could only have been the idea of her lover's approaching predominance in the State that incited her to commit the foolish and grievous error of encouraging him to legalise their union or, if the notion emanated from him, the equally foolish error of consenting to the proposal.

It is not impossible that Tallien was the prime mover in bringing about this measure, a measure fraught with such disastrous consequences to himself. On several occasions he had been publicly reproached for the cynical effrontery with which he flaunted about with his mistress, and he had at that time no reason to forebode that the marriage would cause him such infinite regret. Despite

such criticism, however, there was nothing to prevent his continuing openly to live with Theresia as his mistress; since the private lives of most of his successful colleagues on the Convention were not a whit more edifying than his own. In the case of Theresia on the other hand the motives for taking the matrimonial step were, obviously, powerful in the extreme. Tallien, it must be borne in mind, was not only popular but rich, whereas her property at this time was practically worthless. Tallien moreover was no niggard. He was proud of possessing such a woman for his mistress, and denied her nothing calculated to enhance the brilliance of her state, particularly as the greater part of that brilliance was reflected upon himself. It seemed to her that Tallien, who had proved himself so rapid a climber, was bound to become richer still. She would have to be careful not to let him slip through her fingers in an hour of lassitude or changeful caprice—passions she had reason to know were short-lived, for she had never held even the most ardent of her lovers for very long. Then, too, her pregnancy afforded her a motive and an excellent opportunity for persuading Tallien to agree to a contract which, if ever he became Dictator, would ensure her a place of honour at his side. It was meet that Notre Dame de Thermidor should be more than merely loved by the masses—she required their respect as well.

Such a series of motives points to the conclusion that it was Theresia and not Tallien who was first responsible for the marriage proposal. Be that as it may, the step was apparently decided upon in November 1794 at the latest, for Theresia Cabarrus and her prospective second husband had made up their minds to settle down as soon as the wedding was over, in the little house known as La Chaumière at the far end of the Cours la Reine.

The Terrorist and the ex-Marquise having entered into the bonds of lawful wedlock on December 26, we may

reasonably allot six weeks—certainly no less—as the time necessary for furnishing and fitting up their abode, inasmuch as the front of La Chaumière was the one part of the house which retained its primitive rusticity and which, by the affected modesty of its outward appearance, contrasted strangely with the luxury and magnificence of its interior. The expenditure in which he now indulged clearly demonstrated that he was no longer anxious to conceal the fact that he was in very easy circumstances.

To what reason shall we attribute this change of tactics? In October or November of the year 1794 it was quite as necessary for Tallien to draw a veil over the scandalously criminal means by which he had amassed his fortune as it had been on the morrow of the 9th Thermidor or on the eve of Robespierre's fall.

Of the men who had served as proconsuls in the federalist departments, and whose spoliations had called forth such energetic reproaches, Tallien was far from being regarded as the least culpable; indeed, the contrary was the case. He was notoriously poor before he became a member of the Convention—obviously therefore he was bound to conceal his altered circumstances from the public.

Theresia Cabarrus on the other hand was generally regarded as a woman of means. Her father moreover was His Spanish Majesty's banker, a man who had millions to play with.*

In order that they might make the most of the popularity which fortune had so unexpectedly bestowed upon them, they had to gather round them a number of notabilities, a necessity which involved a well-appointed household. These considerations, which were shared by husband and wife alike, afford a crowning proof that the

* That Tallien was looked upon as a poor man and Theresia as extremely rich is unquestionably a fact. On January 2, 1795, a week after his marriage, Duhem addressing the Convention began a sentence with the words, "We who lack the treasures of la Cabarrus."

match was solely inspired by vanity and interest, motives which, however they may have varied in detail for each of them individually, were equally powerful for them both.

Neither love nor passion nor lust can be held to have brought about the marriage of Theresia Cabarrus and Tallien. Gratitude is equally to be discarded as an explanation of the step. They cared not the slightest for each other. Each had had a most unsatisfactory past, each could throw mud at the other. Their attitude was one of mutual contempt.

Tallien was under no misapprehension regarding Theresia's morals. He knew that ever since she had arrived at womanhood she had always had an intrigue on hand, and he was quite aware he was not marrying a Penelope. He could hardly have deluded himself with the hope that he was going to make sure of her fidelity by means of a legal contract; he was too well versed in the ways of the typical light o' love to imagine such a thing as that. As a matter of fact, he knew perfectly well that Madame Tallien would play him false. After all, it need cause us no surprise to find, in our lackey-legislator, something of the instincts of a pander.

As for Theresia, her conduct was relatively less excusable than Tallien's, for she was under no necessity, at the close of the year 1794, to seek to legalise her union with the Septembriseur.

At Bordeaux, white-haired women of gentle nurture mounted the scaffold with head erect, preferring to die rather than do lip-service to the wreckers of their country; young women dowered with wealth and beauty followed unflinching in their footsteps; frail nuns came forth from the cloister's sheltering fold and passed to death with holy chants upon their lips rather than betray some aged priest whom they had hidden from his would-be murderers; even girls in their teens looked with serene

untroubled eye upon their executioners, and gazed without blenching and without a tremor at the dread instrument of death. But not so Theresia. To save her life and her beauty, to enjoy the continuance of that adulation which her coquetry ensured her, she yielded, nay, she offered herself to the most ruthless murderer of them all. Painfully contrasting with the heroism around her, this ignoble compliance on the part of Theresia has branded her memory with the stigma of ineffaceable ignominy.

At Bordeaux she had at least the motive of fear to explain her unpardonable infamy. But in 1794 when she mated herself with Tallien even that pretext was wanting, and she sank to the level of the basest of prostitutes.

She had not an atom of affection for Tallien. She looked upon him with contempt. She knew the crimes he had committed in September 1792. She knew his record at Tours and at Bordeaux, she knew that everywhere he had played the thief. She knew she would be living on the money he had wrung from prisoners and from victims of the guillotine, for she had seen him at his "business" and had lent him her aid in conducting his infamous transactions. What sort of morality then was hers? She had none.

Fairly and equitably to judge of Theresia's conduct in regard to her second matrimonial venture, we must entirely dissociate her from that attractive yet unmerited reputation with which many of her contemporaries, too deeply enamoured of her beauty and her charm, have contrived to invest her memory.

The sole excuse we can advance for her action was her ignorance of its consequences, an ignorance which, though not complete, was sufficient to conceal from her the misery that for a third of her life was destined to be born of the disgraceful marriage which she had so light-heartedly contracted.

By the time she was twenty-one, Theresia, as we have already observed, was the possessor of one single accomplishment : she knew how to attract. She had dabbled in a score of subjects ; not one of them had she mastered. She could not be said to know either French or Spanish, still less Italian, though she was reputed to be skilled in all three. She chattered plentifully in the jargon of the day, and her vocabulary merely consisted of a hotch-potch of the cant phrases, half sansculotte, half bourgeois, of the 18th century.

Upon the miserably superficial educational foundation which the Chevalier Fontenay and his set—a set already on the downward track—had essayed to give her, she had grafted the folly and the immorality inculcated by the Republican doctrinaires of 1792. One of her characteristics was her lack of the reasoning faculty, for had she possessed it in never so slight a degree she would not have wedded the Terrorist.

Her paramour was a robber, a murderer and a poltroon ; none knew it better than Theresia. But what did it matter to her, since Tallien was the hero of the hour ? Such was the stupidity of this marvellous creature. Her brain was almost as empty as the brain of some pampered beauty in a sultan's seraglio, and during the last days of the Revolution and as long as the Directory lasted that poor brain busied itself as its most glorious aim with the task of enslaving men by kindling in them the desire of her body. In all other respects her intelligence was that of a child.

These considerations do not avail to excuse the infamy of her marriage with Tallien, but they do diminish her moral responsibility for a fault which she was fated to expiate so cruelly.

CHAPTER IV

Tallien's star declines after the 9th Thermidor, Year II—Meditates throwing over the Republic and espousing the Royalist cause—Theresia's part in the Thermidorian reaction—The end of the Jacobin Club—Notre Dame de Thermidor of no account in the world of politics—Tallien's marriage—His friend Fréron and the part played by him in the exploits of the Jeunesse Dorée—Receptions at La Chaumière—Theresia's sham philanthropy—Information laid before the Convention regarding the licentious conduct at La Chaumière—Tallien causes the 9th Thermidor to be decreed a holiday—His apprehensions concerning the insurrections in Germinal and Prairial, Year III—Theresia's second child—Tallien at Quiberon—Seyès denounces his treasonable correspondence with the Royalists before the Committee of Public Safety—Tallien abandons the Vendée captives to their fate at a meeting of the Convention on the 9th Thermidor, Year III—The manœuvre is successful and Theresia makes merry the same evening to celebrate the event.

1794-1795

DESPITE his popular triumph, it was no long time after the 9th Thermidor that Tallien began to discover that his position was far from being an enviable one. He, and with him Fréron, had been expelled from the Jacobin Club; his colleagues of the anti-Robespierrist movement regarded his unmerited popularity with jealous suspicion; he was despised and mistrusted in the Convention, the members of which entertained no doubts regarding the career of crime which he had followed ever since August 10, 1792. His situation was therefore an extremely awkward one, and its awkwardness was accentuated by his own incompetence, for being but a paid assassin who had been hired to do the bloody business of a political group, he was—now that the Government had adopted transporta-

tion as being a less obviously inhuman method of getting rid of its enemies than the guillotine—without any visible *raison d'être*.

Ever since the fall of Robespierre the Republican Government which had followed upon the late actual, but unavowed, dictatorship, had, in deference to the popular craving for milder measures, adopted exile as its weapon instead of death. As yet men knew not the deadly effects of the climates to which the Government consigned its adversaries, and for a time it profited by the apparent humanity of the exchange.

Incapable and despised by his colleagues of the Convention, Tallien had now but one resource to fall back upon, and that was his popularity with the multitude. Of his ill-gotten wealth we say nothing, for this, as we shall shortly see, he had not the sense to employ to good advantage. This popularity—how ephemeral a growth it was may be seen from the fact that it had ceased to exist before the middle of 1795—was far from counterbalancing his loss of prestige with the Government.

The several political parties which have successively gained the upper hand in the State since the dawn of the Revolutionary era, have proved that under a Republican form of government the people as a whole are generally dominated by a bold but numerically insignificant minority.

It follows that to stake one's fortunes on popular favour is the worst of policies that a man of ambition can adopt. In 1791 and 1792, when Tallien created the Commune and made good his foothold therein, when he organised the massacres of August and September, when he secured his election to the Commune and made himself a power in its deliberations, it was not, and he knew it was not, upon the general public that he had placed reliance but upon the ragtag and bobtail of the Sections; upon the forces of subsidised Anarchy.

But his involuntary association with the anti-Robespierriist movement (involving as it did the suppression of the Commune and of the money doled out daily to the ruffians of Paris as a bribe for their support at the meetings of the Sections and Clubs) had deprived him for ever of these allies who, nevertheless, no longer possessed the power they had enjoyed before the 9th Thermidor, and who declined in importance in proportion as the Government learnt to make its decisions prevail by employing the military arm to enforce them.

These considerations are indispensable to our story since they and they alone afford the key to the hesitancy and tergiversation which characterised Tallien's behaviour after the 9th Thermidor and to the measures, as contradictory as they were numerous, to which he committed himself in order to keep his head above the noisome flood which threatened to engulf him. If Theresia was in a fool's paradise concerning the durability of Tallien's popularity, Tallien himself, though he took care not to deceive her, laboured under no such delusion. He knew the sordid foundations on which his Republic was reared.

Making the most of that appearance of prestige which he owed to the popular illusion regarding the alleged beneficent rôle performed by himself and his mistress, he resumed publication at the end of Fructidor of his paper *l'Ami des Citoyens*, and strenuously devoted himself to the task of checkmating the Robespierriist rump, and particularly the Jacobins, his irreconcilable foes.

On November 11, 1794, he had the satisfaction of witnessing the dissolution of the "Société des Amis de la Constitution." Thus was his expulsion from the Jacobin Club avenged. But the event had a deeper import—it meant that the Convention, of which he was still a member, had gained the upper hand of its erstwhile master. In bringing about this consummation the Princesse de Chimay claims to have played an important part.

"Madame Tallien,* accompanied by Fréron and Merlin de Thionville, went to the Jacobin Club, and with superb courage closed its doors, and never so much as one of its members dared to take the keys from her, a circumstance which caused Pitt to exclaim, 'Such a woman as that would be capable of shutting the gates of Hell.' " †

When and where Pitt could have delivered himself of so ridiculous an utterance we need not waste our time in endeavouring to discover.

Turquan, however, in the "Citoyenne Tallien," quotes a letter addressed to Monsieur de Pougens, dated Brussels, November 16, 1824, in which the Princess gives the following detailed account of the incident.

"It was I too who went to the rue Saint Honoré with Fréron and Merlin de Thionville and took the keys from the door of the Jacobin Club. They were thus prevented from holding their meeting that day, and their adversaries seized the opportunity to secure their dissolution before they had time to concert any effective measures of defence." ‡

Tallien's opposition to the Jacobins naturally brought him into close touch with Fréron, then leading the assault of the "jeunesse dorée" upon the revolutionary groups in whose ranks the Robespierrist doctrines still continued to find a home.

The "jeunesse dorée" personified the Monarchist reaction. Had Fréron then, it may be asked, become a Royalist? The answer is that the ex-Terrorist of Provence, despite his anti-revolutionary activities, was fully as much a suspect as his confrère of Languedoc, Tallien. He was however less of a nonentity and possessed undeniable literary gifts. But he had this in common

* Theresia Cabarrus was, however, not yet Madame Tallien !

† "Notre Dame de Thermidor," p. 397.

‡ "La Citoyenne Tallien," p. 166.

with the Septembriseur—he was willing to sell himself to the highest bidder.

We find then that in November 1794 the founder of the *Ami des Citoyens* was casting about for a means of consolidating his position. His political instincts; if one may dignify them by such an epithet, oscillated to and fro among the various factions of the Convention, inclining sometimes to one extreme, sometimes to another; but generally prompting him to maintain an attitude of colourless neutrality. He never steered a decided course; but drifted like a waterlogged hulk almost submerged beneath the waves, driven helplessly hither and thither, caught by every successive stream and eddy in a sea of straits and shoals.

Nevertheless, he took what secret measures he could to secure his safety. His partly clandestine alliance with Fréron, which dates from November 1794, was conceived with this object. In it we can trace the beginnings of the attempts which, as we shall see, he subsequently made, to ingratiate himself with the Monarchy, whence trouble still threatened. The legalisation of his union with Theresia was another and an astuter move. Who could more fittingly play the part of presiding genius in a salon of Art and Gallantry and gather round her the émigrés destined to conduct negotiations between Tallien and the Princes of the Royal House than “Notre Dame de Thermidor,” the lineal descendant of “Notre Dame de Bon Secours” of Bordeaux?

With this aim before him Tallien decided to wed the ci-devant pseudo-marquise. It was a step which implied a view of matrimony that was to say the least of it “liberal,” for the “*dea ex machina*” of Bordeaux, who was supposed to have intervened so heroically between the guillotine and its destined victims, had already proved that she had an unquestionable talent for the conduct of extra-marital intrigues. But that was

nothing. Tallien would shut his eyes to it all and keep them shut until the day should come when, publicly flouted by Barras, he should find it no longer possible to pretend to ignore the fact that he was but the dutiful husband of the Queen of the Palais du Luxembourg.

Subsequent events throw a lurid light on the squalid nature of their calculations ; they also illuminate their fatuity, because they show us that Tallien utterly failed to take into account how dull and commonplace a woman his intended wife really was.

If at the end of the year 1794 we give a glance at Theresia's past, we see that she was never the sort of woman to give any effective support to her husband as he fondly imagined she would, for, up to then, everything she had done had resulted in harm to herself, despite the monstrous vanity which so increased her ideas of her own importance that they reached the very height of bitter selfishness.

In the newspapers of the day, in the diaries of her contemporaries and even among the records of the speeches delivered in the Convention, we search in vain for any reference to political wire-pulling on Theresia's part. Nowhere do we find her regarded as a force in the political world. But as a woman of the *beau monde*, or perhaps we had better say the *demi-monde*, we have details innumerable regarding her career. The cynical indifference with which she displayed the indecencies of her costumes had nothing in common with the disdainful unconcern of a *grande dame* careless of public opinion ; it was much rather the effrontery of a great courtesan confident of her power to seduce.*

* The writers of the day manifest in regard to this matter a unanimity which speaks volumes. On page 23 of the first volume of Duc Victor de Broglie's *Souvenirs* occurs the following passage: "I and a crowd of other people saw Madame Tallien appear at the Ranelagh dressed as Diana, her bosom half bare, cothurni upon her feet and wearing a tunic which descended no further than her knees."

Before her divorce men of distinction in the political world had frequented her salons at Ile Saint Louis and Fontenay aux Roses, yet never had it been her endeavour, as it had been of Madame Roland and Madame de Staël, to incite them to display their talents in stimulating and fruitful emulation. The only competitors she gathered around her were rivals for the possession of her too enslaving charms.

The sole attraction she offered her circle of adorers consisted in the pleasure of listening to the pretty babble of her melodious voice, of being near her, of caressing and fondling her, and of tasting the brief and barren delights of her moments of amorous abandon.

Nothing reveals more thoroughly the sort of estimation in which her lovers held her than the story which Monsieur de Lamothe tells his friend Sottin concerning the adventure he had with her at Bagnères. Never, he says, had he met a woman endowed with such power to seduce and to arouse the sexual passions. The longing for her material possession stung him to a very paroxysm of frenzy. When she abandoned herself to his embraces—which she did without resistance—the delicious sensation of being folded in her strong and superbly moulded arms, of lying pillowed upon her softly heaving bosom, was an ecstasy unrivalled in his experience. There we have precisely the sort of language that a man addicted to habits of gallantry would naturally employ about an amorous encounter with some lovely wanton of his acquaintance.

What did they profit her, all her ardent, passionate intrigues? What did she gain from them but the satisfaction of knowing that her beauty was vaunted and her favours competed for by all the brilliant, distinguished and dashing young men of the day, the satisfaction of being made the object of exaggerated homage, of empty adoration. She had experienced the full gamut of

physical sensation, she had abandoned her charms to every kind of lover, the discreet, the frenzied and the lascivious. Her nerves had thrilled and quivered to every manner of caress, her bosom had throbbed, her body had responded to every manner of embrace, and what had they brought her, these erotic orgies, what but the transient delights of the senses with their inevitable sequel of depression, what but the vain and fleeting triumphs that form all the meagre portion of the wanton's happiness, save indeed when she is astute enough to extort from her lovers an exorbitant price for the blissful moments which she gives—and takes.

All that came of her alliance with the pseudo Marquis de Fontenay (aux Roses) was a sordid divorce. From the very beginning this Bagnères affair had brought discredit upon her at Bordeaux, a discredit which her cynical and criminal concubinage with Tallien and her familiarity with the sansculotte crowd that swarmed about them by no means tended to diminish.

Much has, of course, been made of the beneficent and humanising influence she is supposed to have exerted over her lover. To her efforts was attributed the substitution of a régime of mercy for the dread tyranny of the guillotine. Hence the name bestowed upon her by so many who had escaped death, a name which thereafter she was ever anxious to retain. Yet who was more thoroughly aware than Tallien how misleading, how ill-founded her reputation was.

With no aid from her he had already bartered with his victims for their lives at Tours. Without her co-operation he carried on a similar traffic in the pacification of La Vendée, and had he not made her acquaintance at Bordeaux he would have managed his scoundrelly trade equally profitably with some other partner, la Fontenelle, la Frenelle or whom you will; or, if it comes to that, he would have done it single-handed.

Tallien knew—none better than he—how much or rather how little she had had to do with that *Discours sur l'Education* delivered at the Temple of Reason on November 30, 1793. He knew that her part had been confined to copying it out and signing it, and that the same was true of the *Pétition* that had been read out before the Convention on April 24, 1794. So too with the popular fable about her having nerved him to perform his valiant deed—save the mark !—of the 9th Thermidor : he knew how much truth resided in that legend.

Up to the date of her second marriage she had never attempted to accomplish a single useful, courageous or meritorious action.

We shall now show in what manner she proceeded to make capital out of her ill-deserved popularity and how, her measure alike of men and events distorted by vanity, she made a pitiable performance of the rôle she might have played in the latter days of the Convention, under the Directory and the Consulship of Bonaparte.

The marriage certificate of Tallien and Theresia Cabarrus is dated the 6th Nivôse, Year III, that is to say, December 26, 1794. The names of the contracting parties are given as follows : Jean Lambert Tallien, aged 27 years, son of Lambert Tallien and Jeanne Lambert, and Jeanne Maria Ignace Thérésia Cabarrus, aged 21 years. This certificate was about as simple and brief as it could well be. It contained no mention of the quality of Tallien's parents or his bride's. Even their own status was not referred to.

The marriage took place in the presence of four witnesses, the number required by statute. They were Jean Antoine Dhugues; Stanislas Fréron, Cyprien Le Masson and Antoine Trial. Of the first and the two last we never hear again in connexion with the Talliens ; Stanislas Fréron however was one of their most intimate friends. The dagger-brandishing incident apart, he had

shown himself just as violent as Tallien in the attack on Robespierre. His ostracism by the Jacobins and the attempts which he made as leader of the *jeunesse dorée* to probe out and break up the meetings of the sans-culottes united him still more closely to the Septembriseur and Theresia, particularly to the latter.

From the first Fréron had been at the head of the reactionary movement, the supporters of which made up for their lack of numbers by the audacity with which they pursued their object. Mere handful as they were, they succeeded, by dint of ceaseless demonstrations and speeches, by the vigour and fearlessness with which they made use of the press, in forcing the Government to acquiesce in the so-called Thermidorian reaction and in compelling the remnant of the Robespierrist party to take to ignominious flight. Though the Jacobins were armed with their pikes, these champions of the *jeunesse dorée* carried no weapon more formidable than the bâton; the time-honoured instrument for bringing the unruly citizen to order. Their object was not to kill but to "correct," and rarely did they carry their attacks to the point of taking an adversary's life. Nevertheless, they succeeded in subduing the rascalion rout of republican rascality and in clearing them out from their nests in the faubourgs, their dens along the riverside or their few remaining seats in the Convention.

Charles Lacretelle* was not an intimate of the Talliens, but he was frequently at their house in connexion with the reactionary activities of his friend Fréron; and he became an enthusiastic admirer of Notre Dame de Thermidor. Although he was now fully twenty-eight years of age his heart was as young as ever, and his enthusiasm for Theresia is readily accounted for when we remember that at the time he first became

* Member of the Academy, Professor of History in the Faculty of Letters. Born 1766, died 1855.

acquainted with her, legend was most busy on her behalf.*

Madame Le Sénéchal and her daughters had treated Lacretelle with true maternal and sisterly devotion during a part of the Reign of Terror. His sole object in leaving them was to avoid compromising them by his presence, for he was a suspect, and he therefore enlisted in the army as a private soldier. After the 9th Thermidor the Le Sénéchals bade him come back in order that he might help on the reactionary movement with tongue and pen.

Florian, the fabulist, who had been a favoured rival of his in the affections of one of Madame Le Sénéchal's daughters, was now dead, and Lacretelle was hoping that at last his suit would be heard and that his constancy would receive its just reward. Alas, it was not to be. Mademoiselle Sophie Le Sénéchal had lost her heart to another suitor and begged Charles Lacretelle, whom she persisted in treating as a brother, to be a witness to her marriage contract. Lacretelle performed this crowning act of renunciation and then sought to wipe out the memory of his grief by plunging headlong into the reactionary movement. He began to wage warfare with his pen in the *République Française*, and it was at this

* Furthermore, Lacretelle in his "Dix années d'épreuves" makes a point of dealing gently with Madame Tallien, the reason being that he considered himself under an obligation to her for appealing to Barras on his behalf. After the 18th Fructidor, Year VI (September 4, 1797), a day which witnessed a veritable republican coup d'état against the royalist reaction, the young journalist was arrested and incarcerated in the prison of the *Bureau Central*, only escaping transportation by enduring the horrors of a prolonged term of imprisonment. Vain attempts were made to procure his release from the members of the Directoire, Barras, Laréveillère-Lepaux and Rewbell, Barthélemy, Carnot. Boulay de la Meurthe, his compatriot, had only been able to obtain from the least ferocious among them the following reply: "The wisest thing he can do is to keep quiet in prison and let himself be forgotten." "A like answer," says Lacretelle, "had been given to Mesdames de Staël and Tallien, who had also evinced the liveliest interest on my behalf."

time that he was introduced to Madame Tallien, then enjoying the hey-day of her popularity as "Libératrice de la France."

Lacretelle's affections had received a severe shock; but his heart was still young and unsophisticated, and he found a welcome counter-irritant for his wounded feelings in the bewitching charms of the fair Theresia. This explains the enthusiastic manner in which he refers to her in the passage which we quote below.

"My articles," says he, "achieved a great success. Their publication marked the restoration of freedom to a press which for two mortal years had been unmercifully gagged and bound. Madame Tallien at that time appeared to most of us as the Spirit of Clemency incarnate in the loveliest of human forms. Frequently she bade me come to her, and pointed out to me the best means of bringing to pass the exalted aims she had in view." *

The young man's admiration swiftly developed into love. Theresia deluded him with her affectation of feeling, with the seductive charms she brought to bear upon him, and with her faculty of making every man who approached her imagine she was going to fall in love with him.

It was about the time when he came under Madame Tallien's spell that, not content with penning polemics in the columns of the reactionary press, Charles Lacretelle took an active share in those conflicts of the *jeunesse dorée* which, though they cannot be described as sanguinary, were at all events conspicuously effective.

"It is," says he, "impossible to describe the joy we felt when we recognised beyond all possibility of doubt the effects that were being wrought by the liberty of the press, which had been regained by force even as it had been abolished by force. But two years since every word we had put on paper had been written with the

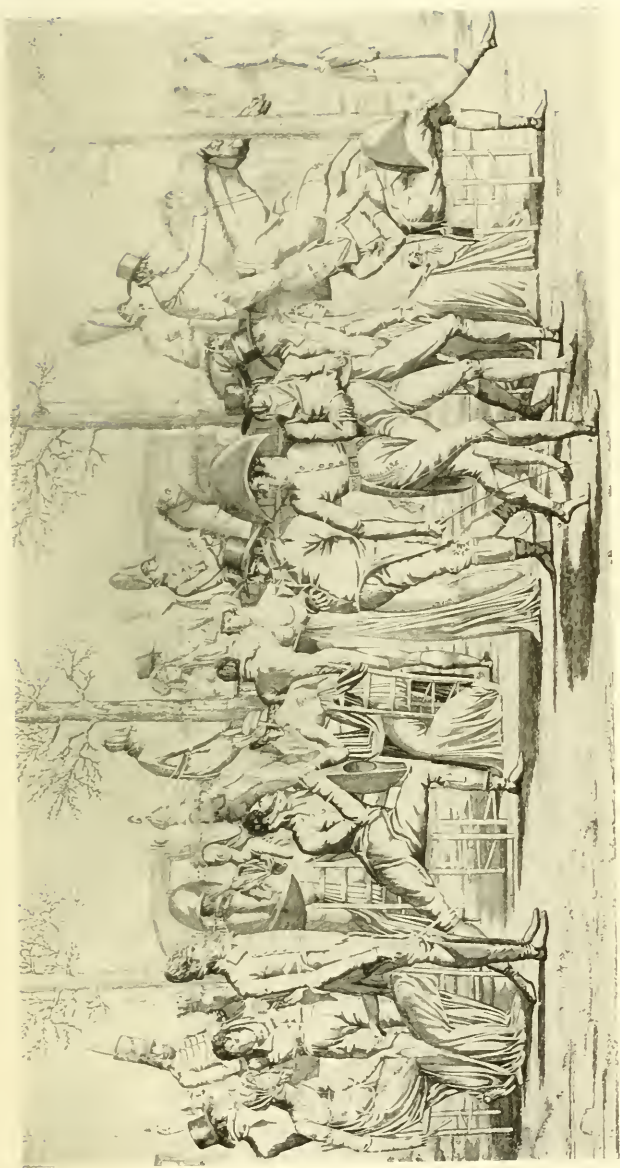
* Ch. Lacretelle, "Dix années d'épreuves," p. 196.

mournful consciousness that we should only be adding fuel to the fury of our foes without instilling into the hearts of our own party the necessary courage to withstand it. But now better days were about to dawn. After a few weeks had gone by our efforts to obtain formal redress—efforts which in some quarters had been characterised as overbold—were crowned with a success which prompted us to yet further demands. Our activities in the press were rewarded by the release of prisoners for whom but a little while since we should have entertained no hope. I cannot however but confess that these events were due far more to Madame Tallien than to ourselves. Soon too we had to take part in combats of a different order, which, if not military, were at any rate ‘athletic,’ conflicts which had nothing to do with writing or making speeches. The Thermidorians—hotly pressed by Billaud, Varennes and the Jacobin cohorts who gave out that the Lion was rousing himself again and made themselves masters of the Jardin des Tuileries and the Palais Royal, the revolutionary strongholds—conceived the idea of issuing a call to arms to certain members of the younger generation who had evinced great eagerness to give the revolutionaries their quietus. Fréron the deputy it was, till recently a Jacobin of Jacobins, who made, or rather prevailed on one of our party, Monsieur Dussaut, to make the appeal; which, taken up first by this paper and then by that, echoed away like a peal of thunder over the length and breadth of France. I will not assume the epic trumpet to proclaim the exploits of these youthful heroes, the *jeunesse dorée* as they were called, *dorée* because they wore embroidered coats instead of carmagnoles and hats instead of red caps. The arms they wielded were certainly not such as we are wont to associate with deeds of derring-do, neither were they lethal in their effect. Their weapon was nothing but a bâton, but as

they marched they chanted a song well calculated to fill their enemies with awe. That song was the 'Réveil du Peuple,' a strain that seemed to recall the wrath of the Ghibellines thundering back defiance to the fury of the Guelphs.

"No sooner did a group begin to gather beneath the shades of evening than the roar of the 'Réveil du Peuple' would be heard on the air, then came a bâton charge which was nearly always followed by the prompt dispersal of the enemy. Thus it was that two or three months' campaigning found us monopolising the duties of escort to the National Convention, and occupying the proud position of the most powerful party in the State. We were in overwhelming evidence at all the theatres, the oracles at every café, the orators at all the Sections, the regulators of public opinion. Finally, we succeeded in breaking up the Jacobin Club, that bugbear of Kings, dethroned the god Marat from his niche in the Pantheon and laid him low in the gutter.

"Despite this fresh manifestation of lawlessness the general conditions rapidly improved; suspects came pouring in one long stream out of their prisons. The Thermidorians, softened by the gracious charm of many a beautiful woman, scattered largesses of free pardons, and showed withal such an air of warmth and good feeling as brought down on them the blessings of those who had had but too good reason for railing. In the streets men fell upon each other's necks, at the theatres acquaintances would meet and express mutual astonishment at finding each other still numbered among the living. The joy men felt at this resurrection, as one may call it, well-nigh reached the point of delirium. Yet there were tears too, tears in abundance as men thought of the loved ones they had lost. Joy went side by side with sorrow; tears and laughter, laughter and tears most strangely intermingled. Stories were told



THE PROMENADE AT LONGCHAMPS

of deeds of heroic self-sacrifice, stories which lent a grace and a glory to the most sorrowful affliction, and oftentimes imparted an historic interest to our writings in the periodicals of the day. Men's hearts and minds, which but a brief while since had been so hideously transformed, seemed now to have grown more exalted, to have been purged of all their dross. The evil spirits had passed from them and angels held their place. Families on whom ruin had fallen, yet found the wherewithal to lighten the burden of those who had shared their bondage. A true heart was the unfailing passport to free forgiveness. Faults were forgotten, generosity was the order of the day. All were bent on pleasure, and pleasure was not hard to seek, for pride and luxury, its two deadliest enemies, had been banished from the scene. There may have been, I will not deny it, a shade too much wildness abroad, but indecorum was a rarity: even grave and serious persons caught the infection and behaved as though they were beginning their young days over again, so hard a task it is for the French long to maintain the sombre countenance of woe.

"After their little affrays with the Jacobins, our militant and by no means 'gilded' youth were always received with great favour. Fêtes were improvised in their honour, and never were heroes so plentiful. However, 'thou shalt not kill' was a cardinal article of our creed, and it was faithfully observed. If woman's beauty made a deeper impression on me in those days than ever before or since, it was because beauty seemed to me to be set off with truer and more artless graces and to be animated by an intenser flame, whether in word or look.

"Our fair ones of France had taken to arraying themselves after the Grecian mode, and if their attire was a little daring it should be remembered that though the Spartan maidens wore still scantier raiment, J.-J

Rousseau, quoting no less an authority than the worthy Plutarch, assures us that whoso looked upon them was on the instant disarmed of all unchaste desires. I should not be believed did I declare it was so with us ; this however I will say : we had seen other imitations of the manners of ancient Greece and Rome far less happy in their effects than these." *

The foregoing passage conveys some idea of the heights of amorous admiration which Lacretelle had reached. The time came when his love for Madame Tallien faded away. He found that her favours were open to all comers, and he even appeared slightly ashamed of himself for having been so unsophisticated as to imagine that such a coquette was capable of love. Still, he always clung to his belief in her legendary generosity and self-sacrifice.

In the course of his "Dix années d'épreuves sous la Révolution," Charles Lacretelle relates how the *jeunesse dorée* helped the Convention to defend itself at the time of the riotous outbreaks of the 12th Germinal and the 1st Prairial of the third year of the Republic (April 1 and May 20, 1795), outbreaks which owed their origin to the ex-Terrorists, who took advantage of the dire and deadly famine then prevailing to lash into fury the denizens of the populous suburbs. He tells how the rioters burst into the Assembly which, powerless to resist, was for capitulating on any terms, and how the *jeunesse dorée*, laying about them with their cudgels, drove out the intruders, who had been paid for their work by the Terrorists, on the 12th Germinal.

There was another occasion on which the Convention owed its deliverance to the prowess of the *jeunesse dorée*, and that was on the night of the 1st Prairial when Ferraud, whom the rioters mistook for Fréron, was murdered and beheaded in the very Hall of the Assembly.

* Ch. Lacretelle, "Dix années d'épreuves," pp. 198-203.

However, the energy of this handful of young men—bourgeois or royalist—occasioned the Convention scarcely less uneasiness than the Parisian mob urged on to deeds of violence by the Terrorists, and, on the 2nd Prairial, the Government made an appeal to the military forces. Not that they did not fear the military too, but their apprehensions of danger from this source were not so great as they would have been had they known that the army contained within its ranks a new dictator whose career of triumph was now about to dawn. They knew nothing of Bonaparte who, four months later, was at Barras' orders to rain bullets into a body of insurgents—composed this time exclusively of Royalists—in the rue Saint Honoré before the very portals of the Church of Saint Roch.

In their valuable study of Paris and the Parisians in the days of the Directoire, the de Goncourts have included an extremely sparkling account of this struggle, which lasted until Year V of the Republic. They give a number of short, pithy extracts from the journals of the day, which show with admirable accuracy the sort of spirit of resistance displayed by the old French stock whom the 9th Thermidor had awakened to new life.

“The *Petite Poste* observes that brawls were of daily occurrence.”

“Long live the Muscadins”—says a paper of the Year III—‘When they offer you the show of violence, hit, and hit hard. Don't forget that it is a natural and lawful thing for a man to stick up for himself.’”

Here is a dialogue from *Le Déjeuner* :

“Off with your black collar and on with a red one if you would avoid remark. It is the undress uniform of the demi-Terreur.”

“But if I do that to-day they'll have my buttons off to-morrow.

“It would be prudent nevertheless to. . . .”

" You're joking, my good sir, for after my buttons they'd take my hat."

" Well, then you'd have to keep out of the sun."

" What are you talking about ! After my hat they'd knock my head off."

" A Jacobin who attacked a black collar was laid out stiff and stark right in the middle of the Palais Royal.

" Don't forget it's now the fashion to defend yourself, reader," says the *Actes des Apôtres* in August 1797, and the *Censeur des Journaux* recounts the following episode in its ' Items of Interest ' column.

" A Jacobin claps hands on a black collar. ' Who are you in mourning for, you blackguardly hound of a Chouan ? ' says he. ' You,' says the Chouan as he blows the other's brains out.' "

But Fréron's connexion with the little battalion of the *jeunesse dorée* came to an end before these dashing exploits of Year V. The dispersal of the band itself was not however accomplished without the assistance of whole bodies of troops levied to assist the army in the wars of the Directoire.

In the beginning, when Fréron led on his band of youthful "braves" to smite the Jacobins hip and thigh, Tallien and Theresia enjoyed a sort of vicarious vengeance most welcome to their hearts. Thus Fréron became their intimate, their gossip ; and the Terrorist, finding himself among the unemployed as the year 1794 was drawing to a close, was still further drawn to attach himself to Fréron as the decision took shape in his mind to open negotiations with the Royalists for a restoration of the Monarchy ; to exchange, that is to say, the rôle of assassin for the rôle of traitor.

At the end of 1794 he inaugurated through Madame Tallien a regular series of receptions at La Chaumière ; and endeavoured by this means to create himself a following. Unhappily it was only too patent that he

possessed neither the abilities nor the energy to lead a party in the State. His ignorance, his cowardice, his intellectual deficiencies; which his fatuous complacency only brought out into stronger relief, provided little encouragement to his colleagues to make him the centre of a political group. Nor could he summon the remnant of the Girondists to his support, for he was sundered from them for ever by an impassable gulf of blood. These "revenants" indeed, these ghosts from another world, became constantly more numerous in the Assembly and formed, by allying themselves with the party of the Plain, a coalition over which Tallien was destined never to obtain the upper hand.

However, a good many Conventionnels whom kindness or curiosity had originally brought to La Chaumière; went there again and again in order to cultivate the acquaintance of the hostess, thinking, doubtless, that they would sooner or later be rewarded with those intimate favours which the lovely Theresia appeared quite willing to bestow on her more sedulous adorers.

In the end Tallien decided that his only chance of counteracting the effects of his waning popularity was to play the traitor to the Republican Government, for when 1795 began to dawn, the enthusiasm of the masses for the "Liberator" and his consort was rapidly declining.

If Tallien was prevented by his indolence, faint-heartedness, and utter lack of character from attaining a position of responsibility in the Government, Theresia, for her part, was too ignorant, too devoted to pleasure, too blinded by vanity, effectively to employ her charms for the advancement of her husband's political fortunes. As for the recruits that gathered round her, she could attract them it is true and she could hold them—though not for long—but she could not persuade them to take the field in her service. The men who came to La Chaumière only returned thither to lay siege to her

bodily charms, and in the end it was always the body that paid the price of their profitless patronage.

The Princesse de Chimay has dictated to her daughter a list of the guests she used to entertain, a list from which we may be perfectly certain no name of importance has been omitted. Nay, it is beyond question that not a few among the notabilities mentioned did not visit Theresia more than once, if indeed they visited her at all.

Let us grant however for the moment that the list is authentic. Among the women we find the names of Sophie Gay, Joséphine de Beauharnais (who brings Madame d'Aiguillon), Madame de Chateau-Regnault; Madame Cambys and Madame de Staël.*

That the last-named appeared on more than one occasion at Madame Tallien's receptions is extremely probable since she considered herself under an obligation to Tallien for his good offices in shielding her from many a hardship during the Terror. We must not overlook the fact that Madame de Staël was, so to speak, a member of the Corps Diplomatique, her husband being the Swedish Ambassador, and that it is quite likely that Tallien was secretly instructed to deal gently with her. Without some such hypothesis it would be difficult to explain the quite exceptional solicitude he displayed for Necker's famous daughter.

Nevertheless, it is quite certain that Madame de Staël was not really on terms of intimacy with the Talliens. She would have been too utterly bored by Theresia, and Theresia would have been too uncomfortably conscious of her intellectual inferiority to the authoress of the "*Considérations sur la Révolution Française*" for any friendship between the two women to have been possible.†

* To these Turquan, in "*La Citoyenne Tallien*," adds Rovère and his wife and Boissy d'Anglas (the latter, if he came, would have been introduced by Lacretelle).

† Princess Hélène de Ligne who knew Madame Tallien says: "She has more jargon than wit."

When she became Princesse de Chimay, however, Madame Tallien was anxious for it to be understood that Madame de Staël had been one of the divinities of her salon. "There was," we are told in language that was obviously 'inspired,' "something grave and majestic about her mien, and she seemed like the Muse of History beside a dancing girl of Herculaneum (Theresia). Madame Tallien used to set her to entertain the diplomats, yet she often found her way back again to the groups where gallantry reigned supreme." *

A propos of Esseid-Ali-Effendi, the Turkish Ambassador who had come to Paris, we are given the names, culled from the columns of *Le Thé*, a "journal satirique," of the various ladies who composed the court of this illustrious individual, the Bey as they called him. This is the list :

"Madame de Noailles, Madame de Fleurieux, Madame Tallien, Madame de Lechaude, Madame de Gervasio, Madame de Lansalle, Madame de Puységur, Mademoiselle de Perregaux, Madame Delor, Madame de Chauvelin, Madame Capon, Mademoiselle de Mascaraille, Madame Maliseska, Madame de Fenouille, Mademoiselle de Ferrières, Mesdames de Caze, Madame de Vigny, Madame Lenormand, Madame d'Ecosset, Madame Ducos-Fonfrède, Madame Récamier, Madame de Croiseul, Madame de Morlaix, Madame de Barre, Mademoiselle Chevalier, Madame de Grand-Maison, Madame de Taille, Mademoiselle Martel, Madame Molinos, Madame de Listenay, Madame de Vieursan, Madame de Sansade, Madame de la Rue-Beaumarchais, Madame Le Breton, Madame de Pully-d'Ormesson, Madame de Valence, Madame de Magne, Madame de Vassy, Madame de Beaumont, Madame Lepage, Madame de Vilette, Madame de Saint-Hilaire, Madame de Morville, Madame de Nanteuil, Madame de Rémusat, Madame Arnaud, Mademoiselle de Nicolaï.

* "Notre Dame de Thermidor," p. 447.

"All these beauties belonged to Madame Tallien's court." *

The quotation from *Le Thé* is peculiarly unfortunate; since the year that witnessed the arrival of Esseid-Ali-Effendi in Paris was not 1795 but 1797, and in 1797 Theresia, having become Barras' concubine, had ceased to be Madame Tallien. In any case, out of the whole long list but one woman only was a political influence—that was Madame de Staël, who most decidedly was not one of the regular attendants at La Chaumière.

With regard to men, the names we meet with are principally those of people of note in the world of art, such as Garat, Cherubini, Mehul, Rhodes, Carle Vernet, Duplessis-Bertaux and Duplessis-Boilly, La Harpe; and among the politicians, Louvet, Fréron, Barras, Sieyès; Lanjuinais and Chénier the fratricide. Hoche and Bonaparte must not be forgotten, but we know that their connexion with the Talliens was of the briefest duration.

Were these the elements out of which the partners of Cours la Reine hoped to create a party? At any rate, their efforts were vain. The few notabilities whom they succeeded in attracting were swamped by a crowd of nobodies, and the whole was much less a political salon than a swarm of gallants gathered together to pay homage to Theresia.

Le Thé moreover tells us in the following extract what was thought by the people of the day concerning the reunions at La Chaumière:

"Who and what are the *beau monde*?—I haven't the ghost of an idea, but you'll find them in all sorts of costumes and all sorts of styles at Barras', Talleyrand's; Antonelle's, Ouvrard's, Madame de Staël's, Madame Tallien's and Madame de Viennay's.—What do they do at Madame de Viennay's?—Gamble.—At Madame Tallien's?—Look after business.—At Madame de Staël's?

* "Notre Dame de Thermidor," pp. 423-424.



MADAME LA BARONNE DE STAËL HOLSTEIN

—They go in for politics.—At Ouvrard's ?—Calculate.—At Antonelle's ?—Conspire.—At Talleyrand's ?—They banter.—At Barras' ?—They look out for newcomers.—At Tivoli ?—They dance." *

That was precisely what did take place at Madame Tallien's. Business indeed was the order of the day; but they were not busy with projects for the welfare of France. The writer in *Le Thé* used the word ironically; alluding on the one hand to Tallien's attempt at treason and on the other to the shady trading concerns that were engineered from the "ménage Tallien."

But Tallien's great coup, the royalist restoration; thanks to his deplorable reputation and the indifferent credit which he enjoyed among his colleagues of the Convention, was hanging fire, and while waiting for this great event to mature he took to speculating in assignats; for of gold he had plenty. He went in for stock-jobbing; trafficked and chattered without a scruple.

"Following the general example he blossomed out as a dealer in soap, candles and cotton bonnets. But his speculations evidently went awry, for towards the end of the Conventional Government we find him joining a provision supply association which, under the name of the Compagnie Ouen; had set up in the rue Taranne. Fouché was a member of the concern and Réal as well. Tallien's anxiety to have a finger in these more or less dubious undertakings was no doubt occasioned by the necessity which beset him of finding the wherewithal to repair the ever-widening breach which Theresia's expenditure was making in his fortune, an expenditure which was certainly not incurred for the purpose of founding those orphanages and asylums for the aged which the circumstances of the time so imperatively demanded." †

No references are given in support of these imputations.

* "Notre Dame de Thermidor," p. 424.

† Turquan, "La Citoyenne Tallien," p. 192.

Nevertheless, broadly speaking, we may take their truth for granted. They would have been applicable in a measure to nearly all the members of the Convention, and from what we know of Tallien's previous rascalities and his wife's extravagances they were no doubt peculiarly applicable to him.

Soon we find the *Journal de France* * declaring that Dumouriez' prophecy had been realised and that a new aristocracy had come to fill the place of the old monarchical nobility.

"Take a walk to-day," said the de Goncourts in their *Société Française pendant le Directoire*, "and whenever you come to a mansion adorned with a court of honour or a porch of sculptured stone, ask who lives there, and you will hear the name of a member of the Convention or of the Directoire. Go out from the city by whatever gate you will and betake yourself to those great country houses enclosed by acres and acres of park land and ask whom they belong to, and again you will have the name of some member of the Directoire or the Convention thrown in your teeth. Ay, the marvels of architecture; the glories of nature, the palace and its splendours, the land and the fatness thereof, the stately groves of the forest all belong to that school of bloodshed—the Convention.

"Yet they were all of them poor men once; they entered the service of the Revolution with scarcely anything to call their own, nay, it seems as though it were but yesterday that they were grumbling and clamouring about the poorness of their pay. And now; in the twinkling of an eye; behold them millionaires. How did they manage it?"

The de Goncourts throw a very considerable light on the nature of Tallien's dealings as a provision contractor in a passage to which Turquan makes reference.

"Alas, poor France," they cry, "alas unhappy and

* Pluviôse, Year V.

too credulous people! Ye whose sons have fallen on the battle-field, laid low by vile traffickers in your own Paris more often than by the foeman's steel, how came these men by their might and ill-gotten wealth? What about the wine-bibbing that went on between the Kings of the Republic and the men who grew rich by selling the lives of the men who fought for her? What of those gaiters that would scarce span the ankle of a little child; what of those shirts just big enough for the grenadiers to make into nightcaps, what of those boots with their cardboard soles, those marsh-grown reeds that passed for fodder, those famished horses, those bleeding feet, those chills and famines; those sunken cheeks and stricken limbs, what in a word of the martyrdom which the armies of France were compelled to undergo? And then again, what of those sixty thousand shells sold for eighteen livres the thousand, those forty-eight bronze cannon that went straight from the arsenal at Metz to the lumber merchant, of those hundred and fifty thousand musket barrels sold to another dealer for scrap iron? What of those military tents that went for eighteen livres apiece, those new coats at three and those waistcoats at two livres each; those five-centime shot cases and those leather bags at a decime apiece; what of those waggons that were stopped on their way and found to be crammed full of army property? If you would know where you can learn all about these things the answer is, 'in the newspaper.'

"What about those deals too in which a company bought cloth at six francs the piece and sold it to the government for seventeen livres seventeen sous, or oatmeal at ten livres the hundredweight and sold it to the navy at twenty-one livres? What about those bargains which left a company; even after it had disgorged four millions, eight or nine millions clear profit? Where do we learn all this? Why, in the newspaper."

Tallien's operations in the world of commerce and finance in the year 1795 were not necessarily a failure ; we must remember that Theresia was a dreadfully expensive wife. Everything we know of Tallien's life shows that he possessed all the qualities that go to make the finished gambler. What then was to prevent him spending like a gambler, that is to say, with the recklessness characteristic of all gamblers and most financiers (who are but a subdivision of the class) save when there is something in their surroundings or their blood to bridle their prodigalities ?

Tallien's chronic lack of funds implies no necessary aspersion on his skill as a speculator. It merely means that he spent freely and rapidly because he could readily have recourse to fresh extortions to make good the deficiency.

Turquan adds ironically that the huge sums Theresia squandered on dress and pleasure did not materially assist the works of charity or add to the stability of the social fabric. Her extravagance was one of the notorious facts of the day, and that at a period when society was by no means unaccustomed to lavish expenditure. This in itself is a proof of Tallien's success as a speculator, to say nothing of Fouché and Réal's association with the same enterprises, for Fouché and Réal were not the men to put their money into any concern of whose success they were not assured.

What however forces itself upon the attention in this connexion is the glaring contrast that exists between Theresia's Bordeaux "Address on Education," between the humanitarian note of the "Petition" which she sent to the Convention in April 1794 and her own selfish and reckless extravagance.

How, unless she were a cynical impostor, could our Lady of Help with her tender sympathy for those who had lost all their worldly goods in the course of the

Revolution, have had the face to lay claim to a reputation for generosity and self-sacrifice when through the twelve years of hideous want by which France was devastated from 1788 to 1800 she never so much as tossed a sixpence to a single one of the starving wretches who surrounded her. How comes it that none of her contemporaries—whether friends, admirers or lovers—nor her historians and panegyrists ever credit her with the performance of a single act of charity? We are entertained with admiring comments regarding her efforts on behalf of others, but the “others” are invariably people of position. All her intercessory letters, even those of the most trifling nature, are reproduced for our admiration, but nowhere do we read that she ever gave so much as ten louis d’or or five hundred livres in assignats to relieve a case of distress or to head a subscription list to a work of charity.

We hear all about her gowns at 12,000 francs, her fifty different perukes, the strings of diamonds that sparkled on her bosom and about her legs and thighs, we are told all about the rings set with pearls that adorned her toes, her crimson coach and the louis which she flung in handfuls of a hundred at a time when playing bouillote, but not even the most painstaking of her biographers records that she ever requited with a crown piece a poor shivering wretch whom the wheels of her carriage bespattered with mud as she drove proudly by.

Now it was precisely from 1795 to the end of the Directoire, when Theresia was making the most insolent display of her wealth, living in luxurious style and giving banquets and fêtes on an extravagant scale at La Chaumière or at her rooms in the rue de la Victoire, that the people of Paris were suffering the most dreadful privations and actually dying of cold and hunger. Before the summer of 1795 the famine had grown worse than ever.

“For more than a fortnight past,” we read in the records of a municipality in the department of the Seine et Marne, “at least two hundred citizens of our commune have been without bread, wheat or flour. Their sole nutriment has consisted of bran and vegetables. We have had the sorrow to see infants left without nourishment, their nurses having no milk wherewith to suckle them, we have seen aged men drop down from want of food and young folks helpless in the fields, unable through sheer weakness to pursue their labours.” *

“At Saint Denis, where there is a population of six thousand, a great proportion of the inhabitants, exhausted from want of food, have had to betake themselves to the workhouses, people of the artisan class having suffered the most severely. For lack of food many women have been discovered unconscious and apparently lifeless in their homes, and many have died with their infants at the breast.” †

During December 31, 1794, while the night was being sped at La Chaumière with dance and revelry, the Seine was frozen over, and on January 23, 1795, there were 16 degrees of frost. “People have to give four hundred livres for a load of wood, and a tiny bundle costs as much as twenty sous. Poor wretches may be seen sawing up their bedsteads in the streets to obtain fuel to cook their food and to prevent themselves dying of cold.” ‡

“Despite the severity of the weather people spend the night waiting in a long line outside the shops of the butchers and bakers, fighting to keep their places and sometimes freezing where they stand. The wildest prices are paid for everything. A quarter of a pound of meat has to last from five to ten days. Four ounces of bread a day is about the average allowance per head, and sometimes they have but three, two, one or even

* *Archives Nationales.*

† *Idem.*

‡ Taine, vol. viii, p. 305.

half an ounce, and sometimes none at all. The well-to-do live on potatoes, but only the well-to-do, for by the middle of Germinal (April 1795) they were fifteen francs the bushel. By the end of the month they had risen to twenty francs, and the price has continued to rise by leaps and bounds till it has reached two hundred and twenty-four francs a bushel, other commodities going up in proportion." *

In a police memorandum of the 9th Frimaire, Year IV (December 1, 1795), we read as follows: "A pitiable case has come to our notice. A man was forced to sell his personal belongings, his furniture, and then, when reduced to the last extremity, was obliged to seek relief from his woes in suicide.

"At present the people who suffer the most, whose calamities are more than they can bear, are business employées, small gentlefolk, artisans and the labouring classes generally, the people who live from hand to mouth. These latter are Jacobins at heart, and supported the Revolution because they thought it would bring them better times. When however they found they were in a worse plight than before, they rose in revolt once again, forced their way into the Tuileries shouting 'Bread and the Constitution of '93,' overawed the Convention, fell upon Féraud, one of the members, cut his throat, and decreed a return of the Reign of Terror, but being at last overcome, disarmed and irretrievably crushed by the National Guard, they were obliged to pay the penalty of the outrages they had committed, of the socialistic ideas which they had established and the economic régime which they had brought about."

In December 1795 Julie de Beauharnais puts the cost of living on a very modest scale for a month at 5022 francs.†

* Schmidt, *Rapports de police*.

† "Beaumarchais et son temps," by M. de Lomenie, vol. ii, p. 488.

On the 6th Germinal the records of the Section de l'Observatoire state that forty-one persons had been obliged to go without bread, that several women being with child had expressed a wish to procure abortion in order to destroy their offspring, while others clamoured for knives wherewith to do themselves to death. On the 24th Germinal it was reported that five or six citizens being without bread, and having no means of purchasing further means of subsistence, threw themselves into the Seine. On the 26th Germinal three persons dropped down from exhaustion in the Boulevard du Temple. On the 14th Floréal a woman whose husband had become insane and whose four children had been without bread for two days, being demented with grief, fell to dragging herself along in the gutter, beating her head against the ground and tearing her hair, after which she gathered herself up in a state of maniacal frenzy and made as if to hurl herself in the river. On the 23rd Floréal a woman having no bread to give her child bound it to her side and leapt with it into the river. On the 11th Messidor it was reported that the cases of people throwing themselves into the Seine were so numerous that at Saint Cloud the task of recovering the bodies had become one of considerable magnitude.

How cruel therefore was the irony which bestowed the name of "Notre Dame de Bon Secours" on Madame Tallien who never, so far as the records show, performed or assisted in a single act of charity, and who thought nothing of squandering a sum of 300,000 livres in assignats in order to provide ten of her guests with a passable dinner.

In his work "Le Curieux," however, Charles Nauroy quotes a passage from the *Souvenirs* of Boucher de Perthes in which the Princesse de Chimay is referred to in glowing terms.

"She is, I repeat," he says, "a kind-hearted, excellent

woman who has done and still does an infinite amount of good. She cannot so much as hear of a case of misfortune without wishing to go to the rescue, and, rich as she now is, she would soon part company with all she possessed did not her husband—he too one of the best of men—keep a restraining hand upon her. For carrying on her good works she has recourse to lotteries, collections and subscriptions. One simply cannot refuse her when she begs, she is irresistible.” *

The fact that this testimony emanates from Boucher de Perthes is in itself enough to make us eager to reproduce it. But we do so not without a feeling of regret that we can find no other passage of a similar nature to confirm it. Nevertheless, though in fairness we have shown our readiness to quote this piece of evidence in Theresia’s favour, logic compels us to state that it in no wise invalidates the conclusions to which we have previously come concerning her.

It is quite likely that having grown old, having lost her former powers of fascination, Theresia, or the Princesse de Chimay as she had then become, was impelled by her unconquerable vanity, certainly not by the promptings of her heart, to revive her early but unmerited reputation of Lady Bountiful by associating herself with works of charity. To the end of her days she persisted in her endeavours to obliterate, so far as in her lay, the memory of her guilty relationship with Tallien, Barras and Ouvrard. But her eternal egoism was discernible even in this latest pose, for if it is an undeniable characteristic of our race (from which even the most generous of us are not exempt) that we tend to live more and more in and for ourselves as our years increase, that we grow ever less eager to place our energies and our possessions at the service of our fellows, we may

* Boucher de Perthes, “*Sous dix rois*,” vol. iii, p. 168. Turquan, “*La Citoyenne Tallien*,” p. 319.

regard it as a moral certainty that Theresia, who was never of a charitable nature in her youth, did not develop any genuinely altruistic inclinations in her old age.

Despite the amiable affirmations of Boucher de Perthes, who it must be borne in mind was connected with Theresia's family, we consider that to admit as evidence the eulogies of her generosity, kindness of heart and love of others which Theresia herself doubtless inspired, would be just a little too egregiously indulgent. For the author of "*Sous Dix Rois*" cannot conceal from us that his flattering references were suggested by the Princesse de Chimay herself—the very wording of the passage we have quoted makes this abundantly clear.

Madame de Caraman Chimay, who in point of intelligence was no great improvement on Madame de Fontenay, Madame Tallien and the deputy Madame Barras, reveals the selfish and egoistic nature of her motives by the manner in which she set about her works of philanthropy. Lotteries, collections, subscriptions! These were her methods, and by their means she achieved the maximum of *éclat* with the minimum of expense. Secret well-doing was not at all in her line.

It needed no accidental circumstance, no indiscretion on the part of some too inquisitive acquaintance to unearth and lay bare her acts of charity. She took care to have them proclaimed from the housetops, and thus to afford a grateful titillation to her incurable vanity. One may indeed ask, whether the spurious altruism of her later years is not, if possible, more painful to contemplate than the indifference to the ills of others which she displayed in her younger days, when her beauty afforded at least some excuse for her immoderate self-conceit.

During the first ten months of her wedded life with Tallien, Theresia afforded a prelude to her triumphs as Queen of the Directoire by the brilliancy of her fêtes and receptions at La Chaumière.

La Chaumière, that is to say The Thatched House, was a rendezvous for the beau monde that had formerly belonged to Mademoiselle Raucourt, the celebrated Tragedy Queen of the Directoire.* It was rather a low structure surrounded by gardens and standing a little way back from the Allée des Veuves like all the other similar houses of this period. It was situated at the far end of the aforesaid avenue, now known as the Avenue Montaigne, not far from the Seine and at the bottom of the Cours la Reine. Roofed with thatch and adorned with creepers its outward appearance suggested† the artificial rusticity of a piece of stage scenery, a rusticity

* "Tragedy, whose flame she kept alight, recompensed her handsomely. Raucourt has a substantial income and keeps her establishment going on a princely scale. She is still as kind-hearted as ever and never leaves any of her friends in the lurch." E. & J. de Goncourt, *La Société Française pendant le Directoire*.

Now we know that included in the marriage portion bestowed on Theresia by her father François Cabarrus were two houses in the Allée des Veuves. It is therefore a little difficult to understand why she should have wanted to buy yet another in the same thoroughfare from Mademoiselle Raucourt. There are no documents extant to throw any decisive light upon the matter, and in their absence we may legitimately infer that the story of the purchase arose from a confusion or, probably, inversion of the real facts. If this is so we may take it that it was Mademoiselle Raucourt who rented the place from Theresia and had it decorated outside in rustic style under the direction of a theatrical decorator, and that subsequently, at the close of the year 1794, Theresia resumed possession of it, either by arrangement or merely because the agreement had run out, a little prior to her marriage with Tallien.

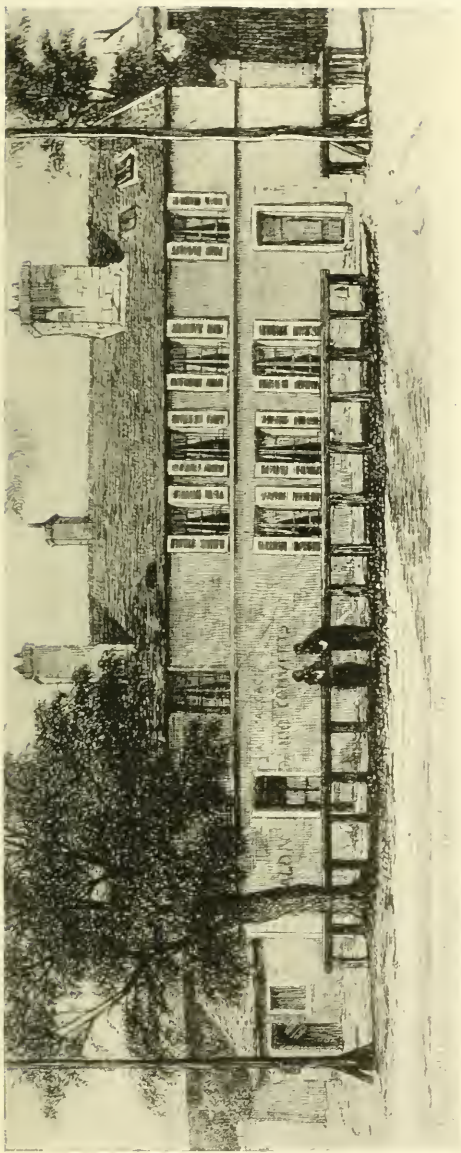
About four years later, in a letter to his wife which he wrote from Rosetta in Egypt, Tallien expressed the wish that he might one day be back in La Chaumière again, and begged her not to part with it. From this it may be gathered that the place belonged to Theresia and that it had not been bought with her husband's money. Further than this, after her divorce from Tallien she split up the property for sale, which proves that it was her own property.

† "It is not quite easy to realise," says Lenotre in his "Paris Révolutionnaire," "what the Rond Point des Champs Elysées was like a hundred years ago. A circular space ornamented with grassy plots and surrounded with trees somewhat resembling an open glade in a royal forest, it was intersected by the main road to Neuilly stretching away riband-like into the distance. There was not so much as a house to be seen, the immense triangular piece of ground which extends as far as Cours la Reine with its forcing frames, wells, little garden allotments, trim

which was however in striking contrast with the sumptuous elegance of its interior appointments. Still, it was not by purchasing the costly furniture and objets d'art with which La Chaumière was so profusely adorned that the ex-Terrorist lightened his purse of the plunder which he had brought back with him from the Gironde. In 1794 and 1795 exquisite things that had been stolen from the émigrés were to be had for a mere song ; moreover it is at least possible that the place was fitted up with furniture and different articles from Fontenay aux Roses. But when we remember the outrageous prices that were demanded for such commodities as bread, meat and candles, which by order of the Bureau Central were fixed respectively at sixty, one hundred and twenty and forty-five francs the pound ; when we consider that the hire of a fiacre for an hour cost a thousand francs, it is not difficult to divine where the money went. La Belle

lettuce beds, &c., being entirely devoted to market gardening. Two avenues of trees traversed the flat, the one a sort of mall always deserted and practically allowed to run to waste, had no name and led nowhere—to-day it is known as the Avenue d'Antin. The other was of great length and led in the direction of the fire station at Chaillot. It was composed of huge twisted elms protected from possible injury by vehicles—that never came—by massive fences dating from the time of Monsieur de Marigny. The footpath was overgrown with grass in which narrow tracks had been worn by the feet of the passers-by, gardeners, laundry-women and vine-dressers who worked in the vineyards of Chaillot which began at this point. The spot is so secluded, so sequestered, so peaceful, that, formerly called the Avenue of Sighs, it at length came to be known as the Allée des Veuves or Widows' Walk, and in 1812 la Tynna was still able to say of it that it was really a suitable retreat for widows who were genuinely afflicted at the loss of their husbands. It is the Avenue Montaigne of the present day.

" At the far end of the Allée des Veuves near the Seine there was to be seen in the year 1795, half hidden by a cluster of poplars and lilac trees, a house of rustic appearance known as La Chaumière. By reason of a caprice of Madame Tallien's, this little-frequented corner of Paris had suddenly become the resort of the beau monde. She had had the house painted after the manner of a comic opera farmhouse, and in such a way as to give an impression of weather-stained bricks and worm-eaten woodwork. Flowering creepers reached to the roof, which consisted of thatch picturesquely overgrown with moss." Lenotre *Vieilles Maisons, vieux Papiers*, vol. i, pp. 227-228.



CAFÉ RESTAURANT UPON THE SITE OF THE OLD THATCHED HOUSE BELONGING TO TALLIEN

Tallien used to give dinner-parties—the surest means of getting a few people of note about her—and after dinner she would receive a host of guests of all sorts and conditions, among whom however young people of reactionary sympathies were in the majority.

If it sometimes happened that a too credulous émigré or aristocrat such as Charles Lacretelle suffered himself to be deceived by the soft words of pity for those in misfortune which fell from the lips of Notre Dame de Thermidor or by Tallien's loud-mouthed expressions of sympathy with suffering humanity, the vast majority of the dandies who swarmed about Theresia were far more interested in the whiteness and lovely contour of her neck and shoulders, in the voluptuous languor with which, in the dance, she would yield herself up to the feverish caresses of her partner and silently incline her ear to declarations white hot with passion, showing by smiles and sidelong glances how greatly such utterances were to her taste.

Madame Tallien was tall, and her stature did not allow her to run the risk of incurring ridicule by dancing with men beneath her own height. This fact of itself suffices to explain how it was that Madame Tallien was in the habit of dancing less frequently than other women, and how it came about that she sometimes refused to take part in a cotillon—when for example she would have had to join hands with some diminutive but important personage whom she would have offended by a refusal. But with all the Spanish blood she had in her veins she was naturally far too fond of gaiety not to be passionately in love with dancing or to forgo without some very serious motive the pleasure of being encircled, embraced, and sometimes immodestly caressed by cavaliers whose sensual appetites the lascivious motions of her body must have whetted to frenzy. It is hardly to be supposed that the integrity of the conjugal bond would not suffer

fatal consequences from gatherings where the ruling influence was the tempting loveliness of a young woman who had broken her troth with her first husband and deceived her lovers one after another (or sometimes two or three together); not even making an exception in favour of Tallien himself.

What time Pichegru was busy subduing Holland with soldiers that had no shoes to their feet and capturing the Stadtholder's ships with the aid of his hussars whom he marched over the frozen North Sea to board them; the Venus of the *jeunesse dorée* in whose honour the naïf Lacretelle consumed such a quantity of over-delicate incense, was gaining triumph after triumph over her votaries at La Chaumière without doing any substantial good to her husband's cause.

By the 13th Nivôse, Year III, that is to say January 2, 1795, stories of the too brilliant, too luxurious gatherings at La Chaumière had even reached the Convention, for one of the deputies, Duhem, made from the tribune a most violent attack—equally insulting in form and substance—upon Madame Tallien, to whom he contemptuously referred as “la Cabarrus.”

Tallien, in a fury, broke in upon his colleague's discourse, violently demanded leave to address the Assembly, and without waiting for that leave to be granted rushed up the steps of the tribune. A hush immediately fell upon the audience, and they waited with feelings of amused curiosity to hear what sort of retort the Septembriseur would make. However, the outraged husband did not smite his wife's calumniators hip and thigh. He offered indeed no evidence; no proof of the good character of the woman who bore his name, he contented himself with talking wildly and vaguely—particularly vaguely—about “atrocious slander,” concerning which he did not condescend to particularise. He merely asserted that Cabarrus' daughter was his wife; that he

had known her for a long while, that he had saved her life at Bordeaux; and that her misfortunes and her virtues (virtues, ye gods !) had awakened his love for her.

Having delivered himself of these protestations—they were more vociferous than convincing and for a very good reason—Tallien diverted the attention of his hearers into a new channel by harking back on the attempts that had been made by one of Robespierre's emissaries to prevail on Theresia to incriminate him when she had been a prisoner in the tyrant's clutches. But the Assembly, realising doubtless that the only effect of raking up the unsavoury depths of Tallien's private life would be still further and quite unnecessarily to sully its own tarnished reputation, allowed the matter to drop.

Nineteen days later, on January 21, the Convention proceeded in state to the Place de la Révolution in order, Arsène Houssaye tells us, to celebrate the death of Robespierre. Tallien, we learn on the same authority, and Merlin de Thionville received the principal honours of the occasion. Merlin de Thionville failed, apparently; to estimate Theresia's husband at his true worth, but we may take it that with Theresia herself he was on terms of something more than friendship, for he was afterwards accustomed to refer to her after the manner of a quondam lover who had managed to shake off the old fascination.

The *Tableau de Paris* of March 8, 1796, records that "one evening; Madame Tallien, who had been alternately displaying her talents at the harp and the piano, was apparently anxious to prove that there were no limits to her versatility and began to recite some extracts from the part of Agrippina in *Britannicus*, whereupon Merlin de Thionville exclaimed, 'Upon my word, my dear, you have taken to the part of Agrippina just as I took to the part of Brutus, by natural instinct.' The sally

was greeted with a general burst of laughter, in which Madame Tallien had the good sense to join." We may therefore conclude that the support which Merlin gave to Tallien the year before was dictated by his affection for Theresia.

Be that as it may, here is the sort of sentimentality that was mouthed by our ex-Terrorist of the Gironde on that January 21, 1795 :

"The splendid deeds that were wrought on the 9th Thermidor of glorious memory must never be suffered to sink into oblivion," and he proceeded to demand the erection of a memorial column. "In this city," cried he; "whose loyal sons took their stand by the Convention when a herd of assassins—the tyrant's hirelings—were pouring into the vestibule to do their bloody work, let us raise a monument that will recall to our remotest posterity the unwavering courage of their forefathers. In the years to be, as the anniversary of this day comes round, let the legislative assemblies, the corporate authorities of this commune go forth and range themselves about this column, and let them cause to be recited to our descendants the story of our dangers and our triumphs in those days when Justice at last came to enthrone herself side by side with Liberty."

"But," objected Legendre, "it would be beneath the dignity of the Convention to take a step that would tend to exalt a miserable wretch to the height of a European tyrant. Robespierre was but one of Crime's apprentices." To this Tallien replied in high bombastic vein. "I tell Legendre," said he, "that it will in no way magnify Robespierre's importance to keep the glorious anniversary of the 9th Thermidor, for it is not alone the fall of Robespierre and his accomplices that we shall celebrate. Before the dawn of that never-to-be-forgotten day Justice was banished from the soil of France, every man had a sword over his head, Tyranny was the implacable

foe of every senator and man of energy whose abilities might seem a possible hindrance to its design of enslaving the people. It was not only the royalists who fell victims to the assassin's knife, a similar fate befell the staunchest republicans. We, then, will gather in unity around this column to rejoice in the overthrow of that monstrous power which endeavoured to measure itself with the Convention, I mean that hot-bed of conspiracy the Commune, which seemed to hold the belief that the Convention was but the creature of the Paris Commune, and to forget that it was composed of the representatives of all the eighty-six departments of the Republic."

Moved by Tallien's eloquence, the Convention decreed that the anniversary of the 9th Thermidor should be observed as a public holiday, and the band of the Institute which had accompanied the return of the deputies from the Place de la Révolution struck up the *Ca ira*.

It may be pointed out that although the Septembriseur in this egregiously absurd oration of his had referred to the Commune as a band of conspirators and tyrants whose aim was to wrest the supremacy from the Convention, not one of his colleagues rose up to fling in his face the obvious retort that he himself had been in 1792 one of the creators of the body whose usurpations he now affected to denounce.

On the 13th Germinal (April 2, 1795); the morrow of the day upon which the mob had broken into the Hall of the Convention and had been driven forth again by the *jeunesse dorée*, the Septembriseur once more rose and ostentatiously demanded that the deputies who had been condemned to deportation for having been concerned in bringing about the riot should be sentenced to death and executed forthwith.*

This motion; which reflected the panic into which the

* Turquan, "La Citoyenne Tallien," p. 195.

Terrorist had been plunged by the events of the previous day, was greeted with a chorus of reprobation, and its discussion was not proceeded with.

Seeing however that the Convention received a much greater shock on the 1st of Prairial following (May 20), when on the occasion of another so-called popular disturbance—also quelled by the prowess of the *jeunesse dorée*—Deputy Ferraud was assassinated in mistake for Fréron, Tallien deemed that a suitable opportunity had come to get on his feet again and betray what a nightmare he had had by exclaiming that it was not enough to make a few arrests, but that the guillotine ought to be set to work so that such criminals might not be suffered to behold another day.

This second piece of poltroonery was no more favourably received than the first; and Madame Tallien, had she been exercised in her mind concerning her husband's political future, might have perceived from these two significant rebuffs how inconsiderable was the influence he was henceforth destined to possess in the deliberations of the Assembly. While however the representatives of the Republic were feverishly absorbed in the political rivalries of the Year III, Theresia had a totally different matter to think about—the period of her confinement had arrived.

It is probable that she had been obliged to suspend her receptions at La Chaumière and the public display of her charms since the beginning or the middle of April, for, as we have already explained, it was most likely in April or May that she was brought to bed of her second child, the only one of which Tallien could with any degree of certainty claim to have been the father.

Notwithstanding the fact that the child, a girl, was christened Thermidor Rose Theresia, thus recalling the legend of Tallien's passionate love for the woman who had armed him with a dagger to pierce the heart

Robespierre, we may be permitted to doubt whether her mother regarded her advent with rejoicing.

In after years Tallien showed that his child was not indifferent to him if, that is, we are to credit the story that out of the pension of six thousand francs which he received from the Crown during the brief reign of Louis XVIII he set aside half for his daughter.* Of the humiliating circumstances in which the pension came to be bestowed we shall treat in due season.

As far as Madame Tallien was concerned we have no grounds for supposing that she regarded Thermidor Rose with any very excessive maternal affection. The child appears but rarely in the story of her life. She is not heard of indeed until her marriage, when she became Comtesse de Narbonne-Pelet. A strange and sombre irony of fate was that; for oddly enough a Comtesse de Narbonne-Pelet had met her death on the scaffold on the night of the 6th Thermidor in the second year of the Republic.†

True, Comte Felix de Narbonne-Pelet married Rose Thermidor Tallien in defiance of the wishes of his family; though we have it on the authority of Boucher de Perthes that Madame de Pelet was a frequent visitor at the Princesse de Chimay's.

It would be unjust to saddle the children with the faults of their parents. But between ostracism and the most intimate alliance there obviously lies a gulf that can only be bridged by making light of the regard of one's own people. Rose Thermidor's appearance on this mundane scene took place at a most inopportune moment for the parents, namely four or five months after their marriage, and we may readily imagine that Theresia; far from making the event an occasion for festivity and rejoicing, suspended her gaieties with the utmost

* Boucher de Perthes, "Sous dix rois."

† A. Houssaye, "Notre Dame de Thermidor," p. 367

reluctance, and retired into privacy animated by the sole desire of getting over the business as quickly and quietly as possible. No sooner was the child born than it was, we may be sure, put out to nurse; most likely in the country, and then, when it was old enough, relegated to a boarding school.

During the Convention, the Directoire, and even under the Consulate, Theresia's children make no appearance upon the scene. Nevertheless, as ill-luck would have it, our professional beauty was fated to be the mother of a numerous brood. The coquette in her however completely overshadowed the mother during the whole course of her jealous sovereignty. Her children did not enter into her domestic life until after she had forsaken the Lists of Love. And when one comes across Monsieur de Fontenay, her eldest son, in the family circle one is almost inclined to rub one's eyes and ask whether he is really flesh and blood or a ghost.

From a passage by Lenotre dealing with the manner in which she regarded her maternal obligations when she was under the protection of Ouvrard, we can form a pretty exact estimate of what her attitude must have been when on former occasions she had discovered to her chagrin that she was in an interesting condition. "Theresia Cabarrus," the passage runs (since her divorce our heroine had resumed the name of Cabarrus), "Theresia Cabarrus was at this period Ouvrard's mistress-in-chief. Regularly once a year Citoyen Baudelocque, accoucheur, was summoned to the hotel in the rue de Babylone to take part in welcoming the advent of a little stranger. In 1800 it was Clémence Isaure Thérésia; in 1801 Jules Joseph Edouard, in 1802 Clarisse Gabrielle Thérésia, in 1803 Stéphanie Caroline Thérésia. These events occasioned no particular stir. Baudelocque and Schodelet, the concierge at Ouvrard's, acted as witnesses at the Mairie, and as soon as the registration formalities

had been complied with, the new arrival was put out to nurse with a man and his wife called Choisel who lived in the Boulevard des Invalides and devoted their energies to baby-farming. Among their charges at this time was a little fellow who bore the name of Emile de Girardin."

All this testimony is unfortunately too positive to admit of our nourishing any beautiful delusions about Madame Tallien waiting with a mother's tender solicitude for the birth of the child that stirred within her womb. The sole consideration that excited impatience in Theresia's mind was the vexatious interruption that her lying-in would necessitate in the round of her amusements. Instead of breathing prayers of love and gratitude, she was most probably delivering herself in secret of some very adverse comments regarding the Republican who was responsible for these interferences with her social distractions and who put her in such a supremely ridiculous situation with regard to her admirers. Would her beauty suffer? Would she not be less attractive after this stupid business was over than she had been before?—that most assuredly was the question that was occupying her mind to the exclusion of all others.

The "little one" having been bundled out of the way as soon as born—no puling whining brats, no nursing drudgery for her—she never wearied of consulting her mirror, the nurse, the doctor, the *femme de chambre* and such of her intimates as were honoured by permission to enter her bedroom, as to whether her travail had filched from her any of her loveliness.

Tallien would certainly have been treated to anything but a good reception had he come to pester her with his political troubles and his royalist schemes now that she was in a state of anxiety regarding her personal beauty. Let him see to his conspiracies himself, let him manage as best he might, but above all let him not vex her with his unwelcome presence.

However, the satisfactory progress of her convalescence soon relieved her of all misgiving, and when she discovered to her delight that, so far from having suffered; her charms had grown more striking even than before; she became disposed to treat even Tallien with indulgence and to forgive him for the too effective manner in which he had availed himself of her complaisance. Her face betrayed no sign of her "misfortune," her legs, her arms; her shoulders were as faultless as ever they had been, and if her bosom was a trifle less firm it seemed more gloriously abundant than before, and in the satisfaction she felt thereat she failed to realise that this very abundance gave the first silent hint of that coming degeneration that was destined at length to lay her loveliness in ruins.

To complete the good fortune of the Talliens, it happened that the British Government having conveyed fifteen hundred émigrés to Quiberon, the Royalist rebellion in La Vendée, which the government of the Republic imagined had had all the life crushed out of it, burst forth again as fiercely as ever, and it became necessary to take measures for stamping it out.

Shortly afterwards, the Convention caused Tallien to be routed out of bed in the middle of the night and sent him westwards in the capacity of commissioner accompanied by Blad, the Representative. Certainly the Tallien household could not have been awakened by a more agreeable summons, but how had it all come about?

General Hoche, who had been ordered to the West in September 1794 to put down the anti-Republican troubles which had never been thoroughly quelled since the initial outbreaks of 1793; had obtained by means of clever generalship and rather less inhuman methods than those adopted by the majority of the revolutionaries and terrorists, the acceptance of an armistice by the principal Vendean chiefs.

On the 2nd of the following December (1794) the Con-

vention had decreed a general amnesty in favour of such Royalists as should lay down their arms within a month. Thanks to these measures the pacification of the West appeared by the spring of 1795 to be practically complete, when the landing of the fifteen hundred émigrés in the peninsula of Quiberon kindled anew the flames of civil war.

This ill-organised attempt on the part of the Royalist faction was clearly prompted by the success that had attended the movements of their anti-revolutionary friends in Paris and in the South of France.

The Government, panic-stricken at the gravity of the crisis that confronted them, decided to follow in the footsteps of their predecessors and to re-institute the Terror with all its attendant horrors of cruelty and bloodshed. The exploits of Tallien in the Gironde and at Tours marked him out as the very man to despatch to General Hoche to give orders for the wholesale butcheries which that officer would certainly have been reluctant to command, and to provide by fair means or foul such funds and supplies as the army of the Republic might require.

As far as these matters went no restrictions qualified the powers with which Tallien was entrusted, but he was forbidden to interfere in any way with Hoche's military operations—the Government knew, and dreaded, his cowardice and incapacity. Blad was no doubt sent with him to prevent him from indulging in any of those thefts and dishonest dealings to which he was so notoriously prone. Thus his duties were exclusively connected with the "dirty" part of the business, and every precaution was taken to prevent him from deriving any personal profit from the performance of them.

A year ago and he would not have relished such a mission. In the Gironde, Brune and his army had been under his control; he had been top dog. His colleague Ysabeau, though his senior, suffered him to do prac-

tically as he liked. Last, but certainly not least, he enjoyed the confidence of a government who were far more concerned with the task of making themselves feared by the people than with the conduct of the heartless ruffians through whose agency they designed to accomplish their aim. In short, Tallien's latest mission; so far as opportunity for embezzlement and the sale of ransoms was concerned, was decidedly unpromising. But his colleagues had counted without their host. Tallien had another card up his sleeve, and it being impossible for him to make capital out of the enemies of the Republic, he decided to sell his services to the Royalists, while Hoche's noted disinclination to adopt extreme measures with the rebels contributed enormously to the case with which Tallien gave effect to his covert designs.

The mission in question had cropped up in the very nick of time to put the Terrorist in direct communication with the moving spirits of the Royalist faction and to facilitate the realisation of plans which he had hitherto been compelled to arrange by the dangerous means of written or verbal messages.

Despite his habitual unwillingness to commit his ideas to paper, Tallien had been obliged, prior to the Quiberon mission, to put his name to missives of so compromising, even incriminating a character that on being accidentally seized in Holland in July 1795 they had all but brought about his downfall.

It is, then; eminently probable that when he left Paris for La Vendée it was with the fixed determination of playing into the hands of those same Royalists whose execution he had been ordered to carry out, and there is little doubt that he succeeded in effecting his aims without letting either Hoche or Blad obtain an inkling of what was going on.

The exceptional leniency with which Barras and Tallien were treated at the Restoration—and that despite

the fact that they had shown themselves the most truculent of those who had done Louis XVI to death—has always been regarded as a proof of the complicity of these two worthies in the movement that brought about the return of the monarchy. It is certainly beyond question that they would never have been allowed to benefit by an amnesty from which all the other regicides were sternly excluded, had not their treachery to the Republic been irrefutably established.

We may therefore take it that for once in his life the Septembriseur meant what he said when, addressing Hoche's prisoners after the insurrection was at an end, he promised that they should be treated with all the leniency that their misfortunes merited. Nor was he any the less sincere when, in answer to Hoche, who had written him on the eve of his departure for Paris urging him to deal lightly with the prisoners, he stated that he would be their advocate, adding that if it came to the worst he would go down on his knees on the wretches' behalf. When he wrote thus he was hand in glove with the Royalist party, and only simulated reluctance to plead their cause in order the more surely to effect his treasonable aims.

Meanwhile; in Paris; Madame Tallien, being rid for the time of that very lukewarm revolutionary her husband, was beginning to resume her *métier* of professional beauty, what time her spouse himself was showing a judicious preference for service under a single royal master to holding himself at the beck and call of the countless petty tyrants of the Republic.

It would be highly erroneous to suppose that she passed these days—and nights—of perfect liberty in strict and chaste retirement, for she was much more thoroughly posted than her husband in all that was going on behind the scenes in the political world. Of the secrets to which we allude, no journal, no pamphlet, made mention, and

the fact that she was acquainted with them implies that some of those devoted " friends " of hers must have made her their confidante ; they could have reached her from no other source.

Tallien being out of the way, Theresia, we may be quite sure, again resumed her round of gaiety, her receptions and her promenades, again went to the theatre and other public resorts to display to the world the beauty of her form, the elegance of her attire and the magnificence of her jewels. And the admiration of which she was the object, the ardour of her suitors, the pleadings, the passionate declarations, the billets-doux, the assignations, the offerings that were bestowed upon her—how it all must have warmed and rejoiced her heart. Her adorers were not content with laying their hearts at her feet and urging their claims with words aflame with desire, but they must needs shower upon her bouquets and fans, and scented gloves and boxes of sweetmeats, and charms and costly jewels, and all the host of elegant trifles which lovers bring to the mistress who smiles encouragement upon them.

What sudden joys; what unlooked-for delights, what dizzy triumphs ! Such an amazing string of successes would have turned another woman's head. Not so Notre Dame de Thermidor. Her egotism wrapped her round as with a coat of mail and rendered her invulnerable. Her flesh maybe was weak and she paid the penalty of that weakness by a succession of untimely pregnancies which grew more frequent as the years went on, but that was her sole failing, and amid all these little erotic indulgencies, these capitulations to Cupid, she kept a cool and calculating head upon her shoulders.

She was highly inquisitive, and probably plied her " friends " with questions when they were least prepared to resist her importunities. At all events she occasionally obtained news of the utmost value, to judge by the

information that came to her ears on the eve of Tallien's return concerning the perils towards which he was hastening.

"The Committee of Public Safety had proof of his secret relations with the Royalists.* Sieyès—the mole of the Revolution as Robespierre used to call him—it was who unearthed the plot, pounced on the incriminating papers in Holland and laid the whole matter before the Committee." Sieyès was supposed to have been among the visitors at La Chaumière, but that must have been in the early days, for after the unfriendly act to which we have referred he could scarcely have expected a very cordial reception.

As regards the identity of the person from whom she obtained on the eve of her husband's return details of the dangers which threatened them, we have not far to seek; we need look for no out-of-the-way informants: Charles Lacretelle was abundantly able to put her on her guard. He was on the best of terms with Boissy d'Anglas, the most influential member of the Committee of Public Safety, he was in love with Theresia, he knew that the discovery of Tallien's treason would inevitably bring him to the scaffold, and that since the events of the 9th Thermidor argued the closest union between husband and wife, the danger that threatened Theresia was none the less grave. That Theresia should be in ignorance of her husband's treachery would never have gained credence for a moment. If Boissy d'Anglas confided to his young friend the revelations that Sieyès had made to the Committee of Public Safety regarding the Septembriseur's treason—whether in the course of a casual conversation or by express purpose because he knew of his passion for La Belle Tallien—Lacretelle would certainly have endeavoured to save the woman he loved by giving her timely warning, and it was then perhaps that

she rewarded him by giving him her lovely arms to kiss.

Thoroughly alarmed, Theresia waited anxiously for her husband's return. No sooner was he back again than she revealed to him the abyss which yawned at their feet. What course was open to them? Should they take to flight? Could Tallien do it? Had he the wherewithal? Was his property in a portable form, and if they decided on flight whither were they to betake themselves? And what was to become of them in a strange country?

Tallien was evidently unable to furnish a satisfactory solution to any of these problems, for he stayed where he was.

Was it in his power then to escape the guillotine without taking to flight or going into hiding? Clearly it was since he did not budge.

The day after his return was the 9th Thermidor, the anniversary of Robespierre's fall, and instead of marking Tallien's end it witnessed his apotheosis.

At the Convention there were celebrations and rejoicings over the Tyrant's overthrow. First some one would deliver a speech; then the band would strike up. It suited the republican taste of the day. The account of the sitting should be read in Houssaye's version of Theresia's apologia. It is truly extraordinary.

The Representatives were all arrayed in that theatrical garb that was so particularly at variance with their own alleged modesty. In order to show that the Incorruptible's passion for Liberty was nothing but a sham, one of the deputies produced a sabre that had been made for the Tyrant from a design by David.

"This King of the Rapsallion crowd," cried he, "who was for ever preaching about the simple life, was as fond of display as any one. This sabre is simply ablaze with pearl and gold, and see on the belt 'Liberté;

Egalité, Fraternité.' " Truly a delicate action thus to trample on the body of a fallen foe.

Then came a sort of lyrical comparison between those dark days which culminated in Robespierre's fall and the present gladsome hours when, to add to their rejoicings on this the anniversary of the tyrant's death, came the news, which had spread abroad since morning, of the Republic's latest triumph at Quiberon. After which the band struck up again. An overture of Heller's from the Institut National de Musique, *Hymne à la Humanité* by Gossec, words by Baour-Lormian, *Chant du 9 Thermidor* by Lesueur, words by Deforgues, *Hymne Dithyrambique* on Robespierre's plot and the revolution of the 9th Thermidor, words by Rouget de Lisle. There was a call for the *Marseillaise*, the Republican song of songs; and the band blared out the *Marseillaise*. At this point Laréveillère-Lepaux arose to proclaim great news from the Committee of Public Safety. "How splendid will it be, citoyens," he said, "to unite on the same day our hymns to justice and humanity with the glorious pæans in honour of the victory that has befallen our arms." *Invocation à l'harmonie* by blind children, *Hymne du 9 Thermidor*, words by Marie Joseph Chénier (called the fratricide), music by Mehul.

The Abbé Grégoire then arraigns the monarchy in a sort of revolutionary homily. "The story of the Kings," he cries, "is the story of the country's martyrdom. The French have conquered the foreign foe, they will now prove themselves ready to crush the foe that assails them from within." The band crashed out a charge.

Tallien, arrayed in the gaudy trappings of a *représentant en mission*, mounts the rostrum amid thunders of applause. He then declaims the following passage, in striking contrast both in form and substance with his customary

orations, but Roederer was acting as his private secretary at this time.*

"Representatives of the People," he began; "I hasten from the shores of the Ocean to unite a fresh song of victory to those triumphant pæans which greet this great and solemn day. Hail, glorious anniversary of that august day when the people arose and trampled the Tyranny of the Decemvirs beneath their feet. O, happy day, thrice happy day, when the defenders of our country conquered and crushed the forces that foe and parricide had leagued against her, with reverence I salute thee.

"The Committee of Public Safety bade us conquer those enemies of the Republic who had dared to set a profaning foot upon her territory. That behest has been obeyed. The arms of the Republic have overborne the forces of reaction. Quiberon, Fort Penthièvre and all within its walls, men and munitions, are in the hands of the Republic. Ay, my colleagues, the Ocean that laves the shores of France, the Ocean that all too long has been held in ignominious servitude by the ships of Albion, has at length beheld its rightful lords resume their natural attitude, the attitude of triumph. A thrill passed through its deeps as our gallant warriors, mighty in their thirst for vengeance, led onward by their zeal for the Republic, pursued into the very midst of the billows that flung back their prey to perish beneath the sword of Justice, the base and infamous rabble; hirelings of Pitt, to whose accursed treachery are due the losses and disasters against which for five years past our land has had to struggle. They dared, we said, these émigrés, to set foot upon the land of their birth, and by that land shall they be devoured. And lo, it is even so, the oracle has been fulfilled, their native land has devoured them."

* Sainte-Beuve has drawn attention to these collaborations.

Tallien was embraced and conducted home in triumph. That night he gave a banquet at La Chaumière, when eleven toasts were proposed, Tallien taking care to have the fact recorded in the *Moniteur*, while Theresia afterwards made the following reference to them in a letter :

" I had got together all the prominent and extremist members of every party, and when I perceived that the various speakers would probably end by hurling the plates at one another's heads, I rose, and with a coolness which at once restored calmness to the noisy gathering, proposed the following toast : ' Gentlemen,' said I; ' I propose that past errors be forgotten, that old wrongs be forgiven and that all Frenchmen be reconciled one with another.' " *

As to the causes which wrought this transformation; as to how it had come to pass that this anniversary of the 9th Thermidor which boded so ill for Tallien had redounded so amazingly to his " glory," needs no explanation to such as are versed in the devious and crooked ways of policy. Was this the day, when the Government were publicly celebrating the anniversary of the glorious Ninth, that Tallien's accusers had decided to bring about his undoing, when Tallien was popularly regarded as the one and only man who had wrought the overthrow of Robespierre in order that he might rescue the woman he loved from the Tyrant's clutches.

The whole story was apocryphal, three-quarters of the Convention and the whole of the Committee of Public Safety knew that perfectly well, but could they succeed in preventing people, the real genuine common herd; from believing that any charge brought against their hero was a slander if that hero should fall to shouting, " Slander, Conspiracy, Forgery."

With what confidence too could he not give them the lie, with what unabashed mien would he cry shame upon

* " Notre Dame de Thermidor."

their calumnies as he came back with the news that a brilliant victory had been gained over the Royalists, that the rebels of La Vendée had been exterminated, and that all this had been effected with his counsel, by his aid. "I am a bird," he would say; "if you don't believe it, look at my wings. I in league with the Monarchy! What mad rubbish! I have just stamped it out of existence." And so it came to pass, for, breaking his solemn oath to Hoche, he never uttered a syllable in defence of the prisoners whose cause he had sworn to plead from the rostrum of the Convention.

Two hundred Royalists were shot down in cold blood at Vannes. Eight hundred more corpses at Auray vouched for his loyalty to the Republic. Where was the written or living testimony that could avail to counteract the overwhelming evidence of that ghastly heap of dead? An ironic smile must have passed over Tallien's features as he told Theresia, not, we may take it, to set her mind at rest but to be silent and let him alone. "What do you know of politics?" we can hear him saying. "Go and order a banquet to be made ready. More than twenty guests shall sit at our table to-night." The night came and everything happened as he had said. But we have Charles Lacretelle himself telling us that if "Notre Dame de Thermidor glowed with triumph at this banquet given to mark the anniversary of the day which had won her her popular surname, her joy was turned to mortification when she learned a few weeks later that if her husband had saved his neck it had only been at the expense of her precious but legendary reputation." We here quote an account of a typical interview with la belle Tallien, an account in which Charles Lacretelle's naïveté and the feminine duplicity of his idol are brought out into simultaneous relief.

The *jeunesse dorée* knew full well that the Quiberon massacres were Tallien's work, and henceforth they

regarded him as a scoundrel and a foe to be fought relentlessly and unceasingly.

"I was overwhelmed with regret when I reflected that the line we now proposed to pursue would bring grief to Madame Tallien, and possibly set a term to the days of her glory and of her beneficent influence. Yet, after all, was it not her husband who had discrowned her? It had been my good fortune to be brought into frequent contact with her, not only at her own house but at other festive gatherings where gratitude made her the centre of homage and admiration. There was something delightfully friendly about our relations one to the other, but, dazzled as I was by her beauty, I never ventured to speak to her of love. It had oftentimes chanced—on her returning from a triumphant evening at a theatre, and finding ourselves together maybe at her house or at the house of one or other of certain fair dames, among whom may be mentioned the pretty Vicomtesse de Beauharnais, who has since become Empress of the French—that we beguiled the time harmlessly enough amid surroundings and in a social order not altogether untainted, and that I had been occasionally fortunate enough to receive from her lips an innocent kiss. So delighted was she on one occasion with an article I had written that she suffered me to imprint a kiss upon her arms, arms that were worthy of the Capitoline Venus. Not long afterwards, however, I beheld a similar favour bestowed upon a converted Revolutionary, and my dreams were shattered.

"But now I came to her with consternation depicted in my countenance, and when I saw from the unusual pallor of her face how keen had been her sufferings and what anxious vigils she had kept, I could only find some conventional commonplace with which to address her. 'And is this all,' she said, 'all that we have to say to each other after the dreadful events that have taken

place? Ah, doubtless you know what is in my mind even as I know what is in yours.' Then, bursting into a flood of tears, she exclaimed, 'Why, oh why was I not there?' 'God knows,' I replied passionately, 'that not one of the victims of this civil war but voiced the same wish a thousand times.' 'Yes,' she went on, 'I do believe that I should have succeeded in postponing the execution of the sentence; we should have gained time, and once back in Paris I would have put myself at the head of the mothers, the daughters and the sisters of these unhappy émigrés, or rather I would have followed the leadership of Mademoiselle de Sombreuil, compared with whom I am as nothing. Yes, I would have gone with her and knocked at the doors of all our Thermidorians, I would have stood by her side at the bar of the Convention. All the loftiest souls in Paris would have pleaded that mercy should be shown, and a great reprieve would have marked another victory for the women and shed the most glorious lustre on the Convention. Such were the plans that were passing through my mind when I learnt that the émigrés had suffered defeat, as I always felt they must. I was on the point of setting forth when my husband burst in upon me with horror-stricken countenance and, in accents that pierced my soul, cried "All is over." And now I can but repeat to myself that with me too all is over, and that the power that once was mine to protect the fallen, the power which many a poor wretch has had reason to bless, has gone from me for ever. The terrible events that have taken place at Quiberon will afford a pretext for the ungrateful to forget the part I played on the 9th Thermidor. Be it so. I shall not at any rate forget my duty; in secret only will I bewail my fate. Nor will I blame him who shed some glory on my name. To that glory, on which I thought too fondly; I must bid adieu. In a little while, my friend, there will be rained upon my head as many curses as of

old there were showered benedictions, and those who may still regard me as not altogether unworthy of gratitude, will just sigh and ejaculate "Poor Madame Tallien." "

"Do you not recognise as you hear these words how beautiful a soul it was that heaven had clothed in such surpassing loveliness? As she spoke her face and form recovered all their wondrous beauty. For my part, I shared her misgivings too thoroughly to venture to gainsay them. Nevertheless, so far as I was concerned, I replied there was one to whom I should ever remain loyal, whose worship I should never neglect, and that was she whom we were wont to call 'Our Lady of Help.' Her husband entering the room at this point, our intercourse became necessarily cold and constrained and I hastened to take my leave." *

Unhappily Theresia's utterances as here reported by Lacretelle are completely at variance with the facts of the case, for the truth of the matter is that events moved by no means so rapidly as to deprive her of an opportunity to intervene had she been so inclined. †

* Ch. Lacretelle. "Dix années d'épreuves," pp. 242-246.

† In the secret memoirs of the Comte d'Allonville, vol. i, page 394, we read that "Hoche indignantly refusing to witness the massacre took his departure, while the French soldiers declined to become the murderers of men who had only laid down their arms on condition that their lives were spared. It therefore became necessary to order the Belgian troops to do the work."

In giving this account of the matter, M. d'Allonville is either wilfully disguising the true facts of the case out of gratitude to Tallien for services rendered or else Tallien had deceived him by throwing the responsibility for the odious deed upon his colleague Blad. According to d'Allonville, in fact, it would appear that Tallien caused a careless watch to be kept on the prisoners in order to help them to escape, postponed their execution and drew up remonstrances—how and to whom forsooth?—of which no heed was taken. Clearly these are some of the trumped-up stories that Tallien told to the Monarchists who were aware of his attempts to betray the Republic. D'Allonville was possibly in this position, and if so the amazing indulgence exhibited by him towards the Terrorist would be in large measure explained. We now know however that these mendacious excuses are hopelessly swept

Here is a summary of the very definite reports collected by Ludovic Sciout in regard to this matter :

" A military commission was appointed to try the prisoners. It was presided over by an honourable soldier named Laprade, who was a major in the 72nd battalion. Sombreuil was brought before this commission, and protested that a surrender had been agreed upon in regular form. The commission then withdrew to consider the matter, and at length declared that in view of Sombreuil's solemn declarations and of the evidence which had been brought before them they had no right to continue the inquiry. The commission was then immediately dissolved by an order of the *représentants en mission*, who carefully abstained from stating the grounds of their action, and appointed another commission forthwith. Four further commissions were immediately formed by General Lemoine, one not being sufficient for the purpose in view. The garrison at Auray, which supported the statement regarding the surrender, was relieved. Two commissions were set up at Vannes, one at Auray and one at Quiberon. The commissions dealt with the cases summarily after the manner of Maillard's alleged tribunal at l'Abbaye, and of the commissions at Lyons. They were composed of Belgians, as it was feared that the real French soldiers would kick at the business. Sombreuil and the Bishop of Dol were the first to suffer death.*

" General Lemoine, it is said, presided at these execu-

away by the overwhelming evidence which in 1795 people had not dared to adduce. They are once and for all discredited by the fact that proves Tallien's perfidy beyond all manner of doubt; the fact, that is, that he never so much as uttered a word in the presence of the Convention to save the prisoners for whom he had sworn to procure a pardon.

* Count Joseph de Broglie, who was executed at the same time as Sombreuil, loudly denounced the generals and the representatives, calling them cowardly scoundrels. He taunted the judges with their weakness and told them to their faces that they all knew that a surrender had been agreed to.

tions, hurling at the victims jests and gibes that for coarseness and cruelty were worthy of the vilest Jacobins. As had been the case at l'Abbaye, the murderers rushed forward to loot the bodies of the dead the moment the volley had been fired, and as had happened at Nantes after the wholesale executions which had been carried out by Carrier's command, dogs were let loose to mangle and devour the naked bodies of the slain. In spite of the law of the 25th Brumaire, Year II, the military commission caused the death sentence to be carried out on children under the age of sixteen. *

"The sole mission of those pseudo-judges was to send their victims to the slaughter, though as a matter of fact this murdering of children had become the rule in the wars of the west.† The Commissions granted respites

* For example, one of the brothers Lassenie and the son of the Marquis de Talhouet were not more than fifteen. Young Le Métayer was fourteen, and young de la Chèrrière thirteen. The law of the 25th Brumaire enacted that the children of returned émigrés under sixteen years of age were to be merely deported. It happened that some of the judges who were less ignorant and less blood-thirsty than their fellows secretly informed some of the prisoners of this enactment and caused them to plead it. Some there were who out of very pity applied the clause in question to prisoners over sixteen.

† "On the 9th Thermidor Tallien delivered himself in the presence of the Convention of a sort of Carmagnole on the subject of Quiberon, and distinguished himself by the perpetration of a beautiful specimen of Jacobin charlatanism. He produced a dagger which he said was a specimen of the weapons with which all the Royalists were armed, intending to stab therewith the loyal sons of France. They did not, he added, turn them upon themselves because they knew them to be poisoned. It ought to be made known to the world at large that the dagger had been tried on an animal and that the nature of the wound had clearly shown the weapon to have been poisoned. This is the solitary instance on which it was averred that the émigrés were possessed of daggers. They were armed in a similar fashion to the English Infantry regiments. The English and French sailors alone carried daggers. It is quite possible that a dagger belonging to a sailor may have been picked up at Quiberon, but this sanguinary buffoon knew perfectly well that no such weapon was borne by the émigré army. Why didn't he say that the swords and bayonets were poisoned? It would have been rather less stupid. But liars are sometimes conspicuously clumsy."

to a certain number of captives, but after a long interval the Committee of Public Safety ordered them to be shot.* It has never been possible to ascertain the precise number of victims. The commissions never really conducted a trial seriously. They only made a few haphazard notes which have been since almost all carefully destroyed, as have the greater part of the documents relating to the Quiberon affair. The total number of all ranks who were thus shot down in cold blood has been estimated at two thousand. The slaughter went on for several weeks." †

Theresia's words as reported by Lacretelle would therefore seem to refer to the first batch of victims who were slaughtered at Vannes. But she lied when she said, "I shall not neglect my duty, and if I give way to grief it will be in secret. I shall bring no charges against the man who has shed some lustre upon my name." Similarly she lied when she told the Marquise de Lage de Volude at Bordeaux that gratitude forbade her to abandon the Terrorist. That it was a lie is proved by the fact that somewhat later, when he had fallen into utter disrepute, she cast him off without the slightest compunction; and by this further fact that, when in later years as *Princesse de Chimay* she had to expiate her shameless past, she condemned him without hesitation.

Had she possessed at heart the qualities that won her the appellation of *Notre Dame de Thermidor*, had she genuinely deserved the title of *Notre Dame de Bon Secours*, she would have availed herself of her prestige, of the undiminished popularity which she still enjoyed, to protest with all the energy at her command against

* "Respite had been granted to about 150 persons, but twenty days later orders came to put them to death. This further massacre extended over a week. Very few prisoners succeeded in getting off with their lives. Even domestics who had never borne arms were shot down together with their masters."

† Ludovic Sciout, "*Le Directoire*," pp. 213-215.

the massacres at Quiberon, or at least to have petitioned the Convention in favour of the eighteen hundred survivors. But no, at the banquet she gave at her house, where the guests made merry and rejoiced over the death of Robespierre and the termination of the Royalist revolt, she never bethought herself of the fallen, vanquished ones of La Vendée nor included among the toasts to which she raised her glass the hope that their lives might be spared.

Would so "Platonic" a demonstration have put her life in jeopardy? Of course not. She sealed her lips because Tallien had need of those two thousand dead to stifle the charge of treason which threatened his undoing. She held her peace and played the merry hostess at the traitor's banquet, and for that reason we must regard her as a willing accomplice of the murderers. Nay, worse; she never bestowed a thought on those two hundred prisoners who had fallen riddled with bullets or on the eighteen hundred who were awaiting the same cruel fate. In her blind stupidity she could behold nothing save the illusory and short-lived triumph of the cut-throat Revolutionary with whom she had mated herself because she thought him wealthy and capable of lording it in Paris as he had lorded it at Bordeaux. However, the illusion was swiftly dissipated, for the 9th Thermidor of the third year of the Republic marked the closing scene of Tallien's triumph, and from that day onward he began to decline, in a series of reverses as ludicrous as they were ignoble, into that condition of meanness and obscurity from which he had emerged, and there he lay, crushed and helpless beneath a mountain of contempt. The tears which Lacretelle saw her shed may have been sincere enough, for she was mourning not the fate of the Quiberon victims, but the loss of that unmerited reputation for tender-heartedness and beneficence which Tallien had wiped out with the blood of the men who

had been shot or guillotined in La Vendée. The Septembriseur might have thrashed her without incurring her hatred provided always he did not mar her beauty; but to have torn away the mask of altruism that had won her such fame and admiration—this was too much, this she could not forgive.

The confidences she imparted to Lacretelle in regard to this matter mark approximately the beginning of her estrangement from the Septembriseur. They had been married some seven or eight months when Tallien's cowardly barbarity brought about a great change in Theresia's ideas. Henceforth it would be her aim to seek the protection of some one a little superior to so unmitigated a scoundrel and buffoon as Tallien, and thus it came about that Barras did not find it necessary to resort to any very special devices of gallantry to win her as a jewel to adorn his pasteboard crown.

CHAPTER V

How la belle Tallien makes the acquaintance of Josephine de Beauharnais—The community of sympathy that bound them together and their exploits in the Lists of Love—Josephine and her liaison with Barras—Bonaparte comes on the scene—Thibaudeau denounces Tallien's Royalist intrigues; a rift between Theresia and Tallien; the marriage of Bonaparte and Josephine—Theresia becomes the mistress of Barras—A pen portrait of Theresia by the Duchesse d'Abrantès—Tallien's efforts on behalf of the Royalists and what came of them—Open rupture between Tallien and Theresia—The Terrorist goes under—How Tallien came to join the Egyptian expedition and the welcome he got from Kléber—He tries to play the spy on behalf of Barras—How Josephine and Theresia amused themselves during the Egyptian expedition—La belle Tallien becomes the deputy—Madame Ouvrard—The establishment in the rue de Babylone—Bonaparte returns and spoils the fun.

1795-1799

TO treat of Barras and Madame Tallien without including Josephine de Beauharnais in the story would be out of the question. For, from the days which witnessed the decline of the Convention, the future Empress and the future deputy-Madame Ouvrard formed, as it were, the setting which encompassed the glories of the Director that was to be.

Though he does not treat the matter with the minuteness which we have brought to bear on our inquiry, Frédéric Masson avows his disbelief in the story which makes La Cabarrus Fontenay a fellow captive of Josephine and Madame d'Aiguillon in the Carmelite prison.

But Napoleon's historian, while admitting that their acquaintance ripened after their captivity, is disposed to think that the two women knew each other before

their imprisonment.* This notion reposes on evidence altogether too flimsy to admit of our adopting it. It would hardly have been in May 1794, in the brief period that intervened between her arrival from Bordeaux and her arrest at Versailles, that Theresia would have had time and opportunity to enter into relations with Beauharnais' wife. Before that she was in Bordeaux, and before that again they did not move in the same circle.

Tallien, however—Masson makes this quite clear—with his friends Réal and Barère, had known Madame de Beauharnais long before. His acquaintance with her probably dated back to 1791 or 1792. He commanded her to be set at liberty on the 19th Thermidor (August 6, 1794), six days after he had freed his mistress, having received orders from the Convention to release all prisoners who were being detained on insufficient grounds, and it was no doubt at the time of his marriage, or possibly shortly before, that he brought the two women together.

By every one Tallien was credited with Josephine's release, and it was to Tallien and no one else that her son Eugène was wont in after years to ascribe it. As a mark of gratitude Eugène made him an allowance, while Josephine took charge of his daughter Thermidor, who was re-christened in her own name.

In the absence of definite information on the point we may assume that when Madame Tallien first came to send out invitations to her receptions at La Chaumière (towards the end of December 1794) Tallien told her that he knew Beauharnais' widow and that as she owed her release to him they could ask her to their house with the certainty that she would accept the invitation. We may further regard it as certain that, notwithstanding the fact that she was in deep mourning—for Alexandre de

* Frédéric Masson, "*Joséphine de Beauharnais*," p. 241.

Beauharnais had been guillotined on the 5th Thermidor (July 23, 1794)—Josephine no doubt put in an appearance. As to whether she went in mourning attire, we regard it as very unlikely, for it was still somewhat rash to display too many signs of grief for the victims of the Revolution. Though she could weep on any occasion, Josephine, who had long been separated from her husband, had been too little of a wife to him to make a very tearful widow.

She readily took a fancy to Theresia. Between these two women with their pleasure-loving tastes there existed more than one affinity. They rapidly became such close friends that when a few months afterwards—in April or May 1795—Madame Tallien gave birth to her second child, the Septembriseur's daughter, Josephine stood god-mother and gave her the name Rose, which, as Masson observes, was subsequently exchanged for Josephine. It was not until after her convalescence that Theresia's infidelity to her second husband took any very serious shape.

Up to the later stages of her pregnancy she had no doubt indulged in more or less harmless flirtations with a good few of the habitués of La Chaumière. Fréron, Lacretelle, Louvet, Merlin de Thionville, and possibly Chénier, to mention only militant politicians, were certainly among her most sedulous—and favoured—admirers. But there is no proof, there is not even any body of convergent probabilities, that would justify the conclusion that she had played Tallien false with any of them. No sooner, however, had the business of the confinement been safely got through than she began to lavish her smiles and favours with a prodigality that offers a field to unlimited conjecture. It is moreover her conduct during this period of her career that has incurred the condemnation of Frédéric Masson, who animadverts with some asperity on the love-making adventures upon which Josephine and Theresia embarked

in the regions of "haute finance," where Tallien was doing his best to advance his fortunes while awaiting the results of his attempted negotiations with the Royalists.

"Between these two women, how numerous," says Masson, "are the points of similarity. In their anxiety to avoid the scaffold they both unhesitatingly took a downward plunge in the social and moral scale and allied themselves with friends and lovers who could scarcely have been to their taste. Both had the same tendencies, the same desires, the same luxurious and extravagant habits. Both exhibited a plentiful lack of moral or religious scruples, and the sole idea of both was to discover the man—protector or husband, it little mattered—rich enough to supply them with the means of pandering to their wildest fancies, of gratifying their every whim. And as money was naturally to be found among people of the banking and business fraternity, it was to the haunts of these gentry that Theresia betook herself with Josephine for companion. As early as the 26th Prairial, Year III (June 14, 1795), we find her on terms of the closest intimacy with Perregaux whom she entertains at dinner, in her husband's presence, together with Fréron, the Vicomtesse de Beauharnais and other dames and messieurs, the messieurs being mostly bankers."*

Now, from the middle of 1795 onwards, Madame Tallien had grown so thoroughly capable of selling herself for money that it is a difficult matter to rebut these very definite charges of Masson's. However, since his statements are unsupported by any reference to authorities, and since he does not appear to have made the career of Notre Dame de Thermidor a special subject of study, we shall take leave to accept with the strictest reserve the moral delinquencies which, he affirms, marked her conduct from the month of June 1795. On the other hand, shortly after the July of that year, when by his infamous

* Frédéric Masson, "Joséphine de Beauharnais."

conduct at Quiberon Tallien had wrought her the irreparable injury of robbing her of her aureole, when, too, perchance it began to dawn on her how powerless and discredited he was, it is eminently probable that the policy of lucrative infidelity forcibly suggested itself to her mind. Moreover, the admirers by whom she was besieged were far too interested in depreciating her husband's character to fail to represent him as a man utterly devoid of prospects. Nevertheless, despite the fact that she was on excellent terms with Barras and that the future Director was paying her marked attentions, she little thought that a day was to come when she would abandon Tallien to become the mistress of Barras.

The days of the Convention were nearly over, and, like the rest of his colleagues, Barras, who had joined with Fouché and Tallien in bringing to pass the downfall of Robespierre, was hugely occupied with the political situation. In his moments of leisure, however, it was far oftener in the society of the *Veuve Beauharnais* than in Theresia's that he sought relief from care. He it was who gave her money to rent the *Hôtel Chantecierne* near the *Chaussée d'Antin* and paid the expenses of her country house at *Croissy*, whither he would despatch; whenever he intended to pay a visit there—he used to ride out on horseback like a general—all sorts of toothsome dainties * in the shape of poultry, game, choice fruit, &c., articles which she would have been hard put to it to obtain for herself during the dreadful famine of 1795. Nor did Barras cut short his intrigue with

* Madame de Beauharnais' establishment at *Croissy* exhibited a luxuriousness which is rather characteristic of the *Creoles*, and while dainties and luxuries were there in abundance necessities were not infrequently lacking. Poultry, game, choice fruit filled the kitchen to overflowing, though the famine was then at its height, but such things as saucepans, glasses, plates, often had to be borrowed from our humble abode. "*Mémoires du Chancelier Pasquier*," p. 118.

Josephine until Bonaparte, who had lost his heart to her a few weeks before, decided to make her his wife.*

Shortly after the 13th Vendémiaire, however, when the Directoire had come into being; there was a great tightening of the bonds between Barras and Theresia.

The successful repression of the Royalist rising in Paris made it quite evident to la belle Tallien that this beau of the Revolution was the coming man, and to win him she brought to bear all the blandishments in her armoury. Josephine she no doubt eclipsed with ease, for she was, according to the canons of the day, her superior in beauty, and in age ten years her junior. From October 1795 to February 1796 a diverting comedy of pouts and smiles, of harmony and discord, was kept up between Barras, Bonaparte, Tallien, Josephine and Theresia, with heavy consequences to France, who by the irony of Fate was compelled to foot the bill.

As Barras went up, Tallien went down. Theresia, deeming it time to cut the painter, was making up her mind to oust Josephine from the affections of the foremost of the Republic's five protectors; when she suddenly found herself without a rival, for Josephine abandoned the fickle Barras and set her cap at the little Corsican general who, though he had nothing but his hopes to call his own, offered her matrimony and the security of position which a legal union involves.

Thus left in the lurch, Barras did not hesitate to replace Josephine by her more youthful and more celebrated friend, and so the succession of plot and counter-plot which might have culminated in estrangement or in tragedy was terminated to the entire satisfaction of every one concerned—save Tallien; who was out in the cold.

But in this welter of conflicting interests in which greed, affection and lust were so curiously intermingled,

* See Masson's "*Joséphine de Beauharnais*," chapter xviii.



PAUL BARRAS

From a drawing by F. Bonneville engraved by J. B. Compagnie

la belle Tallien who seemed to have drawn a King, found in the end that she had drawn a blank. The Director was a worthless card, the only winning trump being the Emperor that was to be.

At the time of which we are writing, no one could have foretold what was in store for Bonaparte, not even Bonaparte himself, for unlimited as may have been his ambition, he could have had no inkling of the manner in which he was to be favoured by fortune, without whose aid, despite his genius, he would never have achieved the dazzling heights of political and military success which struck Europe dumb with amazement.

According to Colonel Jung,* who gives us chapter and verse for his statements, it was not so much due to any merit of his own as to the favour of intrigue and to luck that he owed his promotion to the rank of brigadier-general which he received, after the relief of Toulon, at the hands of Robespierre the younger who, together with Barras and Fréron, was *en mission* with the army of the South.

The strategical merits of the methods employed to relieve the place could hardly have weighed with any of these worthies, for not one of them knew enough of the matter to form an opinion. The only one among them who may have remarked the soldierly qualities and, particularly, the resolute character of the young general was Barras, who had been an officer in the navy, and this no doubt accounts for his calling in Bonaparte to undertake the defence of the Convention against the Royalist rising of the 13th Vendémiaire (October 5; 1795).

The suppression of these riots was hardly a work of sufficient military importance to give an adequate idea of Bonaparte's genius as a soldier. By promoting him, on the day it broke up, to the rank of general of division; the Convention was merely discharging a debt, not

* "Bonaparte et son temps."

bringing forward a man of whose worth they could have formed no estimate. Bonaparte's appointment as second in command of the Home Army had likewise been a reward and a mark of the confidence entertained by Barras and his colleagues in the loyalty of "General Vendémiaire."

For all that, the young Corsican remained poor enough and excited little envy, for he was not given—by Barras—the command of the army in Italy until March 2, 1796, that is to say, after he had made up his mind to marry Beauharnais' widow, to whom he became formally betrothed on February 24, 1796. The legal ceremony was performed on March 9, at the Mairie of the second arrondissement of Paris.*

It was not until the time of the Italian campaign that the first suspicions of Bonaparte's greatness began to dawn upon the public, and Barras displayed considerable surprise at his achievements. As for Madame Tallien and Josephine herself, it was not, if we may credit the assertion of F. Masson, till a far later period that they recognised in their youthful admirer anything more than a good average fighting man.

When just prior to the 13th Vendémiaire the penniless and threadbare Bonaparte begged permission to obtain some cloth from the military stores—not being on active service he could not demand it as a right—it was certainly with no calculating motive that Theresia indited the letter to Lefebvre which decided that functionary to comply with Bonaparte's request.

When, early in May 1795, Napoleon came to Paris after defeating the English at Toulon, he knew neither Theresia nor Josephine. He was probably introduced to the Talliens by Fréron, or more probably still by Barras, after the suppression of the rising in La Vendée, some time,

* G. Lenotre, *Le mariage de Joséphine. Vieux papiers, vieilles maisons.*

that is to say, in August or September 1795.* Even now

* Barras in his *Memoirs* boasts, as might be expected, of having given Bonaparte a start in the world.

"The people who formed my circle in Paris were in a position to remark that since his arrival Bonaparte never quitted my side. He had scarcely any clothes to call his own, and plain and simple as was the dress of the day, he exceeded the fashion in this respect. Being however accustomed to clothe himself without compunction at the country's expense, he came to me to beg that I would arrange for him to be supplied with material for his clothes as I had already done at the siege of Toulon. I gave him *carte blanche* to go to Lefebvre the contractor and get what he wanted. Lefebvre asked him most affably and obligingly what he could do for him. In accordance with his request, Bonaparte received an order for eleven ells of blue cloth for a coat, greatcoat and cape, two ells of red cloth for a waistcoat and undercoat, and several ells of white cloth for breeches. It will be noticed from the exactitude of detail with which I recall this incident that I subscribe to the principle that there is nothing petty in anything appertaining to a great man. Bonaparte demanded 'good measure,' as the saying goes, and Lefebvre used to relate with amusement that the little Corsican made a big draft on the stores of the Republic. Bonaparte never forgave this harmless little piece of mischief, though the perpetrator was the worthiest official of his time.

"Bonaparte asked me to let him have certain arms that were in the Committee Hall. I agreed, and they were handed to him. On this occasion also he took the highest possible view of his own deserts, for he chose the best that were there. Being always seen in my company people thought they were bound to include him when they invited me, and it was thus that Bonaparte received an invitation from Mademoiselle Montansier. He expressed a desire to have a pass for her theatre. She graciously consented, and invited him to dinner. He became one of the old lady's regular guests and assiduous courtiers. I also took him to Madame Tallien's, Madame Château-Renaud's, Madame de Staël's and several other houses where he found a welcome and a dinner. His advances to Madame Tallien met with no success. She treated him with disdain and made him look supremely ridiculous." Barras, *Mémoires*, pp. 284-285.

Barras returns to the matter later on in his *Memoirs*, for he wanted to have it on record that Bonaparte was indebted to him for his introduction to Josephine, and he claims to have been the hero of the story relating to the restoration of Beauharnais' sword, whereas the truth of the matter is that it was Bonaparte who gave it back to young Eugène Beauharnais.

"Some arms," says Barras, "had been seized at her house (Madame de Beauharnais') by mistake. She thought it would be rather an astute move to make her son give out that they had belonged to her late husband, General de Beauharnais, deeming that by so doing she would have an excuse for applying for their return, an application which she proposed to follow up in a variety of ways in order to get into touch with people of influence. Next day she came to see me, ostensibly

Theresia's glory as Notre Dame de Thermidor was on the wane. As to whether he was lucky enough to taste her charms, to gain if only a chance admission to her favours, we cannot say for certain, but it is extremely probable. We have it from Barras that he made bold to declare his passion.*

Subsequently, when he proceeded to take up the command of the army in Italy, we find him concluding a letter to Barras in the following words: "Adieu, mon ami, a few days more and I shall be writing you from Albenga. Tell me all the Paris news. A little kiss to Madame Tallien and Madame Château-Renaud, the former on the mouth, the latter on the cheek." †

Napoleon's love-affairs are sufficiently numerous to show that he had a fondness for the sex, and that he was disposed to court them as he courted victory, in cavalier fashion. If he was somewhat shy with women like Josephine and Theresia, it was because they belonged to a social order in which he had not quite secured a footing. At all events he displayed a ferocious appetite for amorous adventures, for the long period of continence to which his poverty had subjected him had lashed his passions to frenzy, and his ardour was certainly not calculated to displease the sensual natures of such women as Madame de Beauharnais and Madame Tallien, especially the latter.

Madame Tallien, whose charms were particularly intoxicating, amused herself maybe by exciting him beyond endurance. If so, she would have been hoist with her own petard, for, having begun the attack, Bonaparte was not the man to desist until he had conquered. The kiss

to lay her request before me, although it had already been granted. Her real motive was to gain the entrée into my circle, in which she was aware that Madame Tallien had been occupying a place in the front rank since the 7th Thermidor." Barras, *Mémoires*, p. 358.

* Turquan, "La Citoyenne Tallien," p. 232, and "Napoléon Amoureux" pp. 49-56.

† Turquan, "La Citoyenne Tallien," p. 232

“ on the mouth ” which he sent Madame Tallien through Barras on March 31, 1796, certainly denotes the familiarity of the ex-possessor.

But there is a circumstance more convincing still to support the hypothesis that intimate, albeit fleeting, relations existed between Bonaparte and Theresia prior to 1796, namely, the contempt which he afterwards professed for her, a contempt which led him not only relentlessly to exclude her from the Imperial Court but to forbid the Empress Josephine ever to see her again.

If Theresia suffered the young general to work his will with her or if, taken unawares, she yielded—not too reluctantly—to the dash and vigour of his onset, she recovered herself with promptitude, since the intrigue was too quickly over for any whispers of it to get abroad.

It thoroughly consorts with the divergent dispositions of the two partners in this “ affaire ” that the recollections they retained of it were of a totally opposite character, for while the memory of the young Corsican’s passionate ardour lingered pleasantly in the mind of Theresia, Bonaparte could never forget that she had banished him all too soon from her favours, treating him as a lover of whom she was ashamed, a lover who, though he might be forgiven for his audacity in inflicting upon her the sweet pain of one or two defeats, could only win such pardon by promising to carry his presumption no further.

In 1795 and 1796 the hero of the 13th Vendémiaire had no other grievance against Madame Tallien, and these feelings of vexation, of disappointment, were obliterated by the pleasure he derived from his intercourse with Josephine. His message sending a kiss on the mouth to the ex-Notre Dame de Thermidor, though it carried with it a touch of irony, was in no way malicious. In after years, however, when she had come to be looked upon as the scandal, the charm, the shame and the delight of the Directoire, when she had reduced herself by becoming

Ouvrard's mistress to the level of the superior sort of courtesan, Napoleon, remembering how she had conducted herself towards him as the merest light o' love, sternly and irrevocably, but without rancour and without prudery, replied to all her supplications with an inexorable "No." Nay, when she begged for no more than an invitation to the balls at the Tuileries, he replied, "I don't deny that you are a charming woman, but just think what your request amounts to, weigh the matter yourself and decide. You have had two or three husbands, and children by everybody." *

But away back at the latter end of 1795 circumstances were different, and Bonaparte was proud at being received by Madame Tallien, proud at being brought in contact with more or less distinguished women such as the *Veuve de Beauharnais* and *Madame d'Aiguillon*, who accompanied Josephine and was shortly to become *Madame de Navailles*.

There was a certain air of respectability about the *Hôtel Chantreine* where the charming Creole received him (without of course mentioning that she owed her residence to the favours she had bestowed upon Barras) which captivated him even more than the gatherings at *La Chaumière*, where for all their brilliance there was a vague suggestion of something not quite regular, not quite "the thing."

He made very large drafts on his future happiness, and his pre-nuptial familiarities with Josephine explain the readiness with which he departed to join the army in Italy on the very morrow of their marriage. Meanwhile, Madame Tallien, who had made a less fortunate match, began to show mortification at her husband's waning influence.

On October 23, 1795, four days before the dissolution of the Convention, the Terrorist had been made the object

* "Mémorial de Sainte-Hélène."

of a stinging attack from the rostrum of that moribund assembly by his colleague Thibaudeau.

“According to the reports of the Government’s agents at Genoa and Venice,” said the latter, “the émigrés were expecting Tallien to play a conspicuous part in bringing about the Royalist restoration.”

A letter from the Pretender signed with his own hand declared that he had founded great hopes on Tallien. The papers are extant at the Committee.* Tallien, who had been forewarned as to what was about to take place, appeared on the scene in the middle of his adversary’s harangue. His entry was greeted with applause. As usual, he abstained from dealing with the substance of the charges levelled against him. He merely affirmed his loyalty to the Republic and diverted the discussion into another channel.

Chénier the fratricide, formerly a fanatical worshipper of Robespierre, rose to defend the slayer of his god. He recalled to his hearers how Tallien had saved the Republic on the 9th Thermidor two years before, and pointed to the Quiberon massacres as proof of his loyalty and zeal. “At the time of his glorious home-coming from Quiberon,” he cried, “Tallien perceived that we were moving by great strides towards a counter revolution, and his conduct was that of a great citizen.”

Finally, Barras, who was in high favour with the Assembly at this period, it being only six days since it had appointed him Dictator, intervened in turn to rescue his quondam accomplice from the dangerous position in which Thibaudeau’s accusations had placed him. “Let his slanderers tell us,” he cried, “what they were doing on that day (the 9th Thermidor, Year II)—ay, and what they did for many a day thereafter.”

This rejoinder was evidently more than a question ; it was a threat, and an effective one since it shut Thibaudeau’s

* *Débats et décrets, Vendémiaire, Year IV*, pp. 465–505.

mouth, but though it clearly showed that the Dictator was possessed of weapons calculated to inflict more injury on Thibaudeau than Thibaudeau could inflict upon Tallien, it did nothing to clear the character of the latter.*

* Barras in his Memoirs gives the following account of the scene :

" Will it be credited that at the very moment when the Convention was bringing to a successful termination those glorious labours which would have sufficed to occupy another assembly for several sessions, it was made the object of fresh accusations, accusations which seemed to reproach it with a wish to kindle the revolution anew and to resume a system of terrorism by which France still felt itself threatened.

" It is true that these charges emanated from Monsieur Thibaudeau and that they were directed by him against Tallien, whose personal enemy he was, and, further, that Monsieur Thibaudeau had begun his attack during Tallien's absence when the latter could scarcely have foreseen this premeditated 'impromptu.' I think I have remarked that, prior to the 9th Thermidor, Thibaudeau occupied a position in the foremost ranks of the revolutionaries and was unrivalled in the eagerness with which he embraced the principles and adopted the garb of the sansculotte Republican, and that he made himself the object of remark by the conspicuous squalor of his attire. He wore a common jacket, no collar, a shirt unfastened at the neck, and wooden sabots, and to find a parallel to his whole 'get up' you would have to go to Granet the cooper of Marseilles or Armonville the wool-carder of Rheims. Monsieur Thibaudeau, who in his revolutionary days had made no boast of his consistency of conduct, had since endeavoured to make it appear that in all he had done he had acted with the utmost rigidity, and he modestly remarked that he was as firm as a rod of iron. 'Rod of iron, ay,' bitterly exclaimed Fréron, 'but a rod with a pretty big flaw in it, I guess.'

" Tallien, who had very few verbal shafts in his armoury, was not himself a coiner of bons-mots, but he repeated other people's and packed them into those insipid but interminable discourses which had earned him the nickname Robinet d'Eau Tiède (Luke Warmwatertap).

" Camille Desmoulins, prior to the 9th Thermidor, had said of Saint Just that he carried his head like a little god-almighty. 'I will make him carry his otherwise,' retorted Saint Just to whom the speech was reported, and cruelly he kept his word, for he dragged his illustrious victim to the scaffold, whither he followed him shortly afterwards. Here Monsieur Thibaudeau, who from his position among the fieriest revolutionaries had readily voted for the death of Camille Desmoulins, Hérault Séchelles, Danton and a host of others, would no doubt have been delighted to have his revenge for the insult conveyed in Fréron's taunt, which Tallien had repeated, but that was no longer possible, and notwithstanding the manner in which he had pledged himself to the Terrorist in times gone by, he now thought the time had come for him to adopt the speech and demeanour of the reactionaries. It was

If triumph had crowned the Royalist efforts in Paris Tallien might possibly have managed to keep his head above water by pleading the monarchist activities which had been brought home to him in Holland and by continuing to throw all the blame for the massacres at Vannes and Auray upon his colleague Blad. However, the insurrectionary movement of the 13th Vendémiaire was successfully quelled by Bonaparte, and as a consequence Tallien, ten days later, found himself back again like a bad penny with the Council of the Five Hundred. From that date Theresia could have entertained no doubts regarding the hopelessness of her husband's future. How profound was her disappointment! Arsène Houssaye gives us a faint echo of her altered sentiments when he relates that one evening when Theresia chanced to be alone with Tallien she reproached him for his lack of energy, and a little later, on the next page, we find the following passage, which was evidently inspired by the Princesse de Chimay and suggested to Houssaye through Madame du Hallay, her daughter.

"That night Tallien's protests to his wife were of no avail. She remained unconvinced. Something seemed to tell her—women can pierce the veil of the future—that the Thermidorian in him would give place to the in pursuance of this policy that he charged the absent Tallien with wishing to bring back the Reign of Terror. It is said that the King of Prussia adopted the anti-Machiavellian pose in his youth in order to divert attention from the Machiavellian policy he intended to pursue, and that 'he had spat in the dish so that no one else should taste of it.' Similar motives may have actuated Monsieur Thibaudeau when he accused Tallien the Thermidorian of terrorism. The Convention treated this attack, which was equally baseless and malevolent, as it deserved to be treated; Monsieur Thibaudeau's malice was taken at its proper value." Barras, *Mémoires*, pp. 299-300.

We must however beware of regarding Barras' version as gospel. This prince of liars wrote his memoirs when Tallien was of no account, having been cold-shouldered by the Imperial Government as he himself had been, while Thibaudeau, on the other hand, was in high favour with the authorities: *inde iræ*.

Septembriseur. She would have been glad, it seems, to have rid herself of the name of Tallien."

There we have a frank avowal, a straightforward declaration indeed. And this quarrel, so characteristic of the Tallien ménage, is assigned by Houssaye to October 22, 1795, since five lines further on he asks: "Did Madame Tallien exert any influence on the events of the next day's sitting?" * She had learned that for the twentieth time Tallien was going to be attacked. On this occasion Thibaudeau was to be the spokesman.

Thus by the end of October 1795, Theresia, who had never loved the Terrorist, who no longer reposed any hopes in his political future, who saw his fortune rapidly disappearing and with it, one after another, the means of repairing it, was perfectly ready to cling for safety to another protector—and for this protector she was on the look-out.

There was one man who could have brought to pass the splendid dreams in which she had indulged on the morrow of the 12th Thermidor, when she imagined she had exchanged death on the scaffold for a glorious career beneath the ægis of Robespierre's successor. That man was Bonaparte. But in her folly she had kept the little Corsican general at arm's length. He now belonged to Josephine who, in a letter dated 6th Brumaire, Year IV, revealed but too plainly the tender intimacy that existed between them.

The turmoil and confusion consequent upon the rivalry of the political parties in the State afforded Theresia an admirable opportunity to shine, and the question was which cause she should espouse. At the dawn of the Directory her position was still exceedingly favourable, and whether she elected to side with the Monarchists or to throw in her lot with the Republicans, the possession

* This possibly implies that she had requested Barras and Chénier to speak in her husband's defence.

of sufficient intelligence and energy to play a part in the political arena would have ensured her a brilliant future.

But she lacked the good sense which would have enabled her successfully to regulate her life and the force of character to work for anything beyond an immediate advantage. Her sole aim was to remain unceasingly in the public eye, to become more dazzlingly brilliant than ever.

The year 1795 had come to an end, 1796 was well begun, and still the desired protector had not made his appearance.

On March 9, at ten o'clock at night, says Lenotre—to whom we are indebted for giving us in the second volume of his "*Paris Révolutionnaire*" a highly entertaining and graphic account of the ceremony—Bonaparte's civil marriage took place. Barras and Tallien were the witnesses. Bonaparte kept them all waiting for two hours, and at last arrived with the swiftness of a hurricane. He was accompanied by Lemarois, his aide-de-camp, who, despite the fact that he was not yet of age, had also to play the part of a witness. The Mayor, Citoyen Leclercq, tired of waiting, had dropped off into a doze. Bonaparte shook him unceremoniously by the shoulder. As for the marriage register he showed little respect for that. He declared that he was born in Paris, and made himself out to be eighteen months older than he really was, while Josephine deducted four from her tale of years in order not to appear too much his senior. It was from Nice just twenty-two days later that Bonaparte wrote the letter we have quoted above bidding Barras kiss Theresia for him on the mouth. From this we may conclude that Madame Tallien had become the Director's mistress before the middle of March. Theresia had found her mainstay. Alas, it was but a broken reed.

The period of the Directoire marks the zenith of la belle Tallien's glory. She was queen at the Luxembourg;

queen in Paris, but her sovereignty was of a kind that had never before been witnessed.

She had a husband, and the two men who at first successively and later simultaneously enjoyed her charms were married too. Such protectors necessarily deepened the dishonour of her conduct. Their lawful wives lived apart from them, and later on when the eighteenth century dawned and the Republican régime came to be expressed and typified as it were by the Theresia, Ouvrard and Barras trio, Tallien departed to take up his quarters in Egypt, far away from the wife of his bosom.*

* The Duc de Raguse (General Marmont), who was away on service with the army, was sent by Bonaparte to Paris to report on the progress of the war in Italy. He gives us the passage which we quote below, a brief record of his impressions of the "Court" of the Directoire.

"The so-called constitution of the Year III had been in operation since the 13th Vendémiaire, and the government was in the hands of the Directoire. It was the Directoire that had the control of affairs when I came to Paris.

"The period was a remarkable one. Society was just emerging from a welter of barbarism, disorder and bloodshed, a state of affairs which men naturally looked back upon with horror. Nevertheless, the very men to whom these evils were partly due were forcibly retained at the head of affairs. The Emigration and the tragic events of the Revolution had spread mourning throughout France, shattered the social order and played havoc with family ties; but the social order was beginning to take shape again. Pomp—of a sort—and the most flagrant corruption were the twin characteristics of the Directoire. Barras, one of its members, was justly regarded as a debauchee, and profligacy of the most unmitigated description was the note of his court. Certain women of the world whose morals were more than suspect were the chief attractions there and ministered to his pleasure. Supreme among them was Madame Tallien. All the efforts of the imagination would scarcely enable me to form a picture of what she was in reality. Young, possessed of the classic type of beauty, attired in the most admirable taste, she was dowered in equal measure with grace and dignity. Her intellectual gifts did not rise above the ordinary, but she had the faculty of using them to advantage, and captivated every one with her exceeding graciousness. People were thankful to her for the beneficial influence she had wielded in the crisis of the 9th Thermidor, and so it came about that, in addition to the adoration which her beauty excited, she became the recipient of what almost amounted to the grateful homage of the whole people. Tallien at that time appeared to be on good terms with her. He too was invested with a sort of halo of glory by reason of the part he had recently played in Robespierre's overthrow. Thus it happened that

Madame Tallien then was a queen, but her sovereignty rested on no legal union, not even on a natural one, for she was beloved neither by Ouvrard nor by Barras, nor did she love them in turn. She owed her triumph neither to cleverness nor to generosity of heart. Her husband had been the means of destroying the beautiful legend in which she had figured as heroine. By this time "Notre Dame de Thermidor" and "Notre Dame de Bon Secours" had passed into the region of the mythical.

Like Venus, her only strong point was her beauty, and to consolidate her sway it was naturally her aim to reveal rather than to dissemble the charms to which she owed it. From Barras' palace, from her house at Grosbois or Raincy,* she would come forth into the popular resorts of the capital exhibiting her form every day more openly than before. †

a deed which was probably dictated by a sense of urgent danger and the pressing need of self-preservation had come to be publicly regarded as an act of signal devotion, displaying that which is noblest in human nature—the willingness to lay down one's own life for the good of others. An intimate friend of Madame Tallien and Barras was Madame de Beauharnais, but she was older and less strikingly beautiful than her friend." Duc de Raguse, *Mémoires*, pp. 86–88.

Side by side with this judgment we may place the views of Chancellor Pasquier :

"The Directoire," he says, "had not the grit to pursue its course along the path which the auspicious nature of its beginning seemed to mark out for it. It was occasionally cruel, and it was conspicuously ridiculous and corrupt. Barras was sovereign lord, and Madame Tallien and many other women did the honours for him. It was there that Madame de Beauharnais laid the foundations of her great fortune, and there that she made the acquaintance of General Bonaparte." This is Barras' story, and Pasquier, for want of better information, adopted this account of the matter.

"It would argue ingratitude not to allow that Barras was happy in his choice so far as this woman was concerned. From the very beginning of her career she displayed that gentle, kind and compassionate disposition which has characterised her ever since. No sooner did she find herself possessed of influence than she used it to succour and defend the unfortunate."—"Mémoires du Chancelier Pasquier," p. 126.

* Ouvrard's property.

† For the most glowing description of la belle Tallien at this period of her career we must go to the Duchesse d'Abrantès, whose antipathy to Josephine only increased her partiality for Theresia, whom she even

With ever growing immodesty she displayed for all to behold her arms, her shoulders, her bosom and her legs, the climax being reached when she appeared in the Champs Elysées swathed simply in a robe of gauze, with no chemise beneath it.

It was in no inaccessible Olympus that she held her court, but in the public places, amid the throng and press of the common herd. She was the Aphrodite of the People.

Resting her hand—her beautiful dainty little hand—

describes as clever, witty and kind. As regards dress and the question of good looks, Madame d'Abrantès was a woman, and it would have been impossible for her to exaggerate on this theme.

"The centre of attraction at Barras' establishment and at his fêtes was Madame Tallien. I have alluded to this celebrated woman in several of my works, but I do not think that any of my descriptions of her convey an adequate impression of what she really was. Her beauty, of which the sculptures of antiquity give us but an incomplete idea, had a charm not met with in the types of Greece and Rome. She was a Spaniard, and those distinguishing characteristics which belong to the young women of Cadiz were possessed by her in perfection. Her hands, her arms, her teeth all were admirable. Her smile betokened wit and delicacy of perception (qualities which were hers in no small degree), and gave such animation to her countenance that people who beheld her for the first time often gave vent to an involuntary cry of admiration.

"Her wit was at once quick and good-natured, and people who talked with her were sorry when the conversation had to be brought to a close. She possessed both tact and judgment. Her acts of kindness, though not carelessly indiscriminate, covered a wide field, and rarely did she reject an appeal for help when it was in her power to bestow it. Kindness of heart lends an additional charm to the beauty of beautiful woman. She pleased more than other women because of her goodness of heart. How often have I not remarked on this with regard to Madame Récamier.

"Madame Tallien was extremely elegant. She set, she ordained the fashion, and this was unfortunate because it frequently happened that an adornment quite suited to her bewitching features was thoroughly unbecoming to other people. She had taken to wearing a sort of semi-Grecian costume that became her admirably. It was plain, almost severe, and she wore it with consummate grace. It quite disposed of the idea that a pretty woman is made prettier by adornment."—"Histoire des Salons de Paris," by the Duchesse d'Abrantès, pp. 137-139.

Describing one of Barras' receptions at the Luxembourg, the Duchesse d'Abrantès gives us a picture of Madame de Staël arriving on the scene and staying her progress at every step to say a word to the people who bowed to her. The Director perceived her leisurely approach and



MADAME TALLIEN

From a dry-point etching by Gérard in the Musée Carnavalet

on Barras' shoulder, while Barras put his arm about her almost naked waist, she passed through the crowds that thronged the salons at the Luxembourg with never a care, never a thought as to whether she would meet her husband there or no. Her cynicism displayed itself in a magnificent unconcern. The passion which she excited, the desire which filled men's hearts as they beheld her, gave her a feeling of confidence, buoyed her up with a sense of power.

was reflecting that there was no possibility of avoiding a conversation with the woman who was already a celebrity and of whose wit he was somewhat afraid, when the more rapid approach of two other women who, crossing the room without the numerous halts which Madame de Staël permitted herself, reached Barras before her.

"Of one of these women," writes the Duchesse d'Abrantès, "the sole headdress was her own splendid black hair plaited around the head, not hanging down at all, but simply plaited in antique fashion as in the busts in the Vatican. It was a style which admirably became her regular, classic type of beauty, setting off like a framework of ebony the gleaming ivory of her perfect neck and lovely features which, though without apparent colour, were of a whiteness instinct with life and warmth—a veritable complexion of Cadiz. Her only adornment was a long ample robe of muslin falling in large folds about her limbs and modelled after the drapery of a Grecian statue. Only, the robe was of choice Indian muslin and fashioned, no doubt, more elegantly than those of Aspasia or Poppæa. It was caught up at the bosom, and the sleeves were drawn back over the arms and fastened with old-fashioned cameo brooches. Similar cameos adorned her shoulders and her waist. She wore no gloves, but on one of her arms—arms which might have served as a model for Canova's finest statue—she wore a serpent of gold enamelled with black, the head of which was composed of a superb emerald carved in the form of a reptile's head. She also wore a magnificent shawl of cashmere, a luxury then very rare in France, the folds of which she would draw around her with inimitable grace and infinite coquetry, for the crimson and purple hues of the Indian stuff intensified the gleaming whiteness of her arms and shoulders. When she smiled, and she smiled most graciously, in acknowledgment of the many bows that were made to her, she displayed two rows of glittering pearls that must have made many a woman jealous. . . . The other woman was beautiful too, but less gracious than was perhaps necessary in order to fit in with her Minerva-like figure and bearing. Her flatterers bestowed on her the name of Minerva, though as a matter of fact it was not appropriate to her in all respects. These two women were respectively Madame Tallien and Madame Château-Regnault."—"Histoire des Salons de Paris," by the Duchesse d'Abrantès, pp. 142-143.

It would be vain to attempt the task of finding out to whom she gave her love during these four years of triumph and voluptuousness. Like Narcissus, she loved but one thing, her own beauty. Of course, she had had her love passages; that she would never have dreamed of denying, but how could she be expected to retain a recollection of them. Who remembers to-day the hunger of yester-eve, unless indeed there was something very extraordinary connected with it?

What did she achieve in the course of her four years' reign? Nothing! And yet she was not idle. Her life indeed was one continuous strain, and that she bore up under it testifies to her splendid stamina, her magnificent constitution. Yet all her activity produced absolutely no fruit, save the children—and these were accidents—of whom Tallien willy-nilly had to acknowledge himself the father, a most happy solution of the difficulty, for it would have sorely perplexed her had she been called upon to swear to their paternity.

In one way nothing was more secret, in another nothing was more notorious than the sort of life that, from the beginning of the Directoire to the establishment of the Consulate, was led by Madame Tallien, but the secrets were one monotonous succession of boudoir intrigues, all exhibiting the same invariable physiological characteristics. It were better to ignore them all than to attempt the task of describing them in detail, for they would make more tedious reading than the menus of the hundreds of banquets of which she partook during the same period. As for the other side of her life, the particulars are to be found in the thousand and one gazettes, journals, pamphlets, reminiscences and memorials of the day. The de Goncourts, Arsène Houssaye (with some reserve), Turquan (with greater directness) have all given us of their gleanings, and though they left much ungathered we would not ask for a fuller harvest. We

deem it preferable indeed to sum up, within the limits of a few pages, the details with which they furnish us.

In their work "*La Société Française pendant le Directoire*" the de Goncourts begin with a eulogy of la belle Tallien, enlarging on her charms, expatiating on her elegance and refinement. To her influence they ascribe the renaissance of Art and Taste in France, the revival of interest in all things which tend to increase the charm, the delight, the refinement of life. The humanising feminine traits, culled from the popular legend of "*Notre Dame de Thermidor*" are such as would make a poet fall in love with her despite the animalism, the sensualism that underlay her Circe-like nature. How exquisite are these opening pages, and how regrettable it would have been if the de Goncourts had not strained the truth a little in order to bequeath us this truly delightful portrait of Theresia! But alas, this meed of admiration paid we must return to historical fact, and historical fact is inexorable and will not suffer us to behold in Madame Tallien the symbol of France's awakening after the nightmare of the Terror.

In the first place it is by no means the fact that the whole country was in a mood to dance and make merry round Barras' lovely favourite. There were harsh comments, which, like the hisses of an angry audience, pierced and marred the harmony of those who hymned her praises, and they sufficed to show that her ripples of pearly laughter infected none beyond the narrow circle of her admirers and would-be lovers.

The reawakening of France only came about by slow degrees. The process began with the Consulate and continued during the First Empire. The country had been too completely exhausted by the Revolution to join in the scandalous extravagances of the Directoire or in the orgies of vanity that marked the beginning of the reign of Napoleon.

The Emperor did his utmost to repair this condition of national anæmia by laying enormous tolls upon the foreigner. He accelerated the process of convalescence, but only a part of the country's losses had been made good when the "Conquistador" himself was consigned to a life of hopeless exile at St. Helena. In the days of the Directoire it was not France that took again to pleasure and rejoicing, to dance and revel and song, not France, but a handful of upstarts among whom rogues were paramount, and where an honest man or a real true blue aristocrat was a rarity. Only the young people of Paris and nowhere else joined to some extent in the Saturnalia of the Directoire, and that because youth must needs have its fling, must needs find an outlet for its superabundant vitality.

Neither Lyons nor Marseilles, nor indeed any city save Paris had a Madame Tallien to boast of. In the North and in the South and in the Midlands too, in the East and in the West, gloom hung—and was fated long to hang—like a pall upon the land. Even in Paris itself after the primal outburst of joy had spent itself, the people relapsed into a state of melancholy which the fêtes of the Directoire so far from dispelling did but bring out into more conspicuous relief.

Nevertheless, we must beware of imputing all the unwholesome and illusory—especially illusory—delights of that burlesque of an aristocratic society, the Court of the Directoire, to such a complete nonentity as la belle Tallien, seeing how many there were among her rivals who could have taken her place if only they had been gifted with that cynicism or inconsequence which alone won her the vulgar pre-eminence that was hers for a few brief years of her life. The reign of la belle Tallien is to be explained much less by her childish forwardness than by the enduring influence which Barras enjoyed in the Directoire. This dubious scion of an ancient line

appeared to have regarded it as quite a permissible joke to sully the name he pretended to be so proud of, and he was most favourably regarded by the Republican Committee of the last days of the eighteenth century because his own ignominy afforded to the brigands who formed his entourage a guarantee that they would not be molested in carrying on their infamous work of robbery and crime. His scutcheon dragged in the mire shielded and encouraged them in their nefarious activities. Therefore it was that they suffered him to maintain his high position. They did not complain of the mud with which he wantonly bespattered his ancestral title, they uttered no protest against the glaring indecorum of the conduct of Theresia, who amused her protector by the serious manner in which she gave herself the airs of a Royal minion, just as her first husband had aped the graces of the fops and dandies of the old régime when he dubbed himself a Marquis on the strength of his paltry little patrimony at Fontenay aux Roses.

It will assist us to estimate the mental calibre of Barras to know that this Provençal freebooter who had pitched his camp in the Luxembourg palace laughed till the tears ran down his cheeks as he recounted how he had contrived to shift on to Ouvrard's shoulders the ruinous burden of the fair Theresia's upkeep. Ouvrard, the Government contractor who made millions every year out of the victuals, clothes, muskets, cannon and ammunition he supplied to the army, all of which were unfit for anything save the rubbish heap, who killed more of our men by his infamous supplies than fell to the bullets of the enemy, was told that he must keep Theresia and foot the bill or he would obtain none of the fresh contracts he was applying for, and in order that there might be no cheese-paring, no haggling about the funds the fair lady was to draw, Barras made it a condition that Ouvrard should publicly acknowledge her as his mistress. Her

expenditure would thus be the index of his generosity, her luxurious style of living would advertise his wealth, and he would be unable to refuse to gratify her whims without impairing his own financial credit.

Just imagine the sort of man who would shift the burden of a spendthrift mistress on to the shoulders of the troops and the nation and then laugh at the achievement as though at some excellent farce, just imagine the kind of individual and you have Barras to the life.

With this light on the morals of the renegade, one can easily imagine the pleasure he must have derived from the commands ordering that a state welcome should be accorded to Junot and Murat, the emissaries of Bonaparte, the conqueror of Italy.

Grievously hampered in his military operations by the execrable nature of the supplies furnished by the Ouvrards, Napoleon had nevertheless triumphed over every obstacle, but only by extorting from the vanquished the supplies of which he stood in need.

Under pressure of necessity he had given a hint of that bold disregard for the constituted authority which was destined to be the means of raising him first to the Consulship and finally to the Imperial Throne. He held all the sovereigns and aristocratic oligarchies in Italy to ransom in order to pay, feed, clothe and equip his army, levying contributions in money and in kind on the countries he subdued or on the princes who came to sue for terms.*

Thus it was that, by way of reprisal and with the object of conveying to the Directoire in a form which could not fail to be accepted a token of the sovereign contempt in which he held it, he sent home by his aides-de-camp Junot and Murat the colours he had won from the enemy together with cartloads of objets d'art, priceless treasures and money by the million, all extorted from the

* Corrêard, "Le Directoire," p. 433.

conquered Italians. But these spoils, which were brought to the capital like the trophies won by some victorious Cæsar, were borne by men in rags and tatters in order that Paris, and especially the Directoire, should blush with shame at the sight. Despite the rebuke implied in the appearance of the procession that conveyed them, Barras made no bones about receiving such delectable spoils. He commanded that a magnificent reception should be held at the Luxembourg, but before the troops and the Paris crowds he made the simpleton Junot ride past all ablaze in a splendid hussar uniform, flanked on one side by Josephine * and on the other by

* At this time classic style was all the rage, and gave women an opportunity to wear the most daringly scanty attire.

"Artists and literary people could talk and think of nothing but republics and republicanism. Some young people, as I said just now, were to be seen dressed completely à la grecque, walking about quite gravely in white togas edged with crimson. They would linger beneath one of the entrances to the Louvre, and there, as in the shadow of a portico, discuss important affairs of state. They were always grave. They used to hold one hand to their chin, and saluted one another with a nod of the head, endeavouring, even the youngsters among them, to imitate the ancient Romans as best they could. And don't run away with the idea that there were only two or three young scatter-brains in the business—there were two or three hundred of them at least.

"But the republican was not the only party on the 1st and 2nd Prairial, or even on the 13th Vendémiaire. There were a number of young fellows of good family in Paris who had adopted a style of their own in matters of dress. They wore a grey redingote with a black collar, a black or green cravat, their hair they wore powdered and done up 'en oreilles de chien,' and they carried great cudgels in their hands. At the riding school or in the society of the rue du Bac any one wearing cadettes would have been knocked down, as more than one instance goes to show. As for the sham Greek, he was safe enough—people only laughed in his face." "*Mémoires de la Duchesse d'Abrantès*," pp. 404-405.

"The women, the *merveilleuses*, were equally or even more ridiculous. With their hair à la grecque, with gowns à la grecque, they wore the dress of 400 B.C. but with a 'difference,' and sighed and simpered in the die-away style of 1798, the worst of all affectations. Only Madame Tallien and a few other women followed the pure Greek mode in such manner as not to offend French taste. They wore short hair, and the women in this respect copied Madame Tallien, whose perfectly modelled head, admirably poised as it was upon her shoulders, wonderfully

Theresia, both of them half naked. Thus the glory of Bonaparte shone in a setting of cynicism and licentiousness. Truly a quaint conceit. Barras was the "prop" on whom la belle Tallien was at this time leaning. But though your women of the marketplace are no prudes, this was more than they could bear, and as they stood behind the soldiers that lined the street as the procession went by and beheld this unspeakable profanation of the blood that their children had shed for their country, when they caught sight of the shoddy vicomte and his shameless wanton, "A bas Notre Dame de Thermidor !" were the words that they yelled—almost spat—in her face. As soon as Barras' star had waned, Theresia, despite the gold which Ouvrard showered on her with lavish hand, came to the ground. Her fall was swift and sudden, and reduced to their true proportions the glory and merits of the "fille reine" of the Directoire.

At this point, in order to obtain a better notion of the sort of estimation in which Theresa was held, we will give a glance at some of the gazettes that were published between 1795 and 1798.

In the Year V the *Rapsodies* had the cruelty to print a flaring denial of the story about a Royalist having pinned to the hem of Citoyenne Tallien's Roman costume a card bearing the inscription "Hands off the Nation's Property."

The *Petite Poste* published the reply of another "frondeur," who, having insistently dogged Madame Tallien, was asked by her why he was scrutinising her so intently. "It is not you I am looking at, Madame," was the rejoinder; "I am examining the Crown jewels."

A pamphlet which spoke with angry scorn of the suited this style of coiffure, though it must be confessed that as at the present day some of the women were only fit to act as models for a caricaturist." "*Histoire des Salons de Paris*," by the Duchesse d'Abrantès, pp. 228-229.

diamonds she wore on her front paws and her hind paws referred to her as the most outrageous trull in Paris.

But enough of the gazettes and pamphlets, let us look at the letters and memoirs of some of her contemporaries.

Mallet du Pan in his *Correspondance avec la cour de Vienne* gives expression to his whole-hearted contempt for Barras and his court and the women who adorned it. He is especially severe on Madame Tallien, whom he dubs a *coquinc*. Being not only a Monarchist but a Huguenot into the bargain, we could hardly expect to find him very indulgent to the licentious mistress of the worst of the Directors.

Let us now hear what one of the members of the Directoire, a republican regicide, has to say. Larévellière-Lépeaux states in his *Mémoires* that Barras was wholly surrounded by rogues and harlots. The people who formed his "set," both men and women he described as "filthy," and asserts that his colleague confessed to having turned his quarters at the Luxembourg into an open resort for debauchery. The author of "Les Mémoires d'une inconnue" says that no pure young girl could be seen there without compromising her reputation. La belle Tallien however appeared in Barras' apartments at the Luxembourg every day. She presided at nearly all his private luncheon parties; she was present at all his receptions and all his fêtes, making quite clear by speech and gesture, and by the manner in which she made herself appear to be perfectly at home, the kind of terms she was on with the "Vicomte" (Barras).

In the intervals she would show herself at the Hôtel Thélusson,* the Cercle des Etrangers, the Pavillon de Hanovre, the Elysée, and a host of other places whither

* In the chapter headed "Bal des Victimes" of her "Histoire des Salons de Paris," Madame d'Abrantès writes as follows:

"When it was recognised that there would be no dances at private houses for a long time to come, the most up-to-date young men among the *incroyables* and the most elegant of the *merveilleuses*, decided to go

she went in company with women of easy, sometimes of very scandalously easy virtue, such as for example Madame Hamelin, who, possessing genuine gifts as a wit, employed them to mock at Mallet du Pan in sallies so lewd that they brought a blush even to Barras' hardened cheek.

Theresia bore no part in these more than broad exhibitions of verbal give and take, and the Duc de Raguse, though one of her admirers, admits that she was debarred

and dance at the public ballrooms where, if people of good society went en masse, there would be no risk of encountering individuals not of their own set. The principle being agreed on, a place was selected. The first was the Hôtel de Richelieu at the other end of the rue Louis le Grand; this was why it was called the Bal de Richelieu. Later on a dancing club was started at the Hôtel de Thélusson, and this in a similar manner was known as the Bal Thélusson. [The Hôtel Thélusson no longer exists. It used to stand opposite the rue Cerruti, now the rue Laffitte. Murat purchased it when he married, that is, two years later. Its entrance consisted of an immense façade in very poor taste.] But it was the former of these two 'bals' that was called by a really singular appellation—it came to be known as the Bal des Victimes, and this is the origin of the name:

"At the time when France was plunged in mourning and beheld each day the slaughter of her children, most of the women who were cast into prison, being desirous of saving their wealth of hair in order to bequeath it to those whom they loved, had adopted the practice of anticipating the executioner by cutting it off themselves. When later on they were released from prison they appeared with short hair, and the first of them all was Madame Tallien. Being the perfection of loveliness the fashion suited her and she continued it. But it was a very different thing for the women who had no beauty to boast of. However, the fashion became general and it was gallantly referred to as 'une coiffure à la victime.'

"These 'bals des victimes' were, despite what I have said, very brilliant affairs, but they suffered from the great drawback that attaches to entertainments given with no hostess, no mistress of the house to preside over them. There was a certain frigidity about them, although too much licence was what was naturally to be apprehended in a spot where there was no one to repress any tendency to indecorum.

"It was at the time of these 'bals des victimes' that Madame Tallien was at the zenith of her triumph. Truly so lovely a woman is a wonder of creation that God should seldom bestow upon this earth. It was she who favoured the 'coiffure à la victime' because it became her marvellously well. As to the dancing she took no part in it. I never saw her dance, and at the time of which I am speaking she was as slender as an antelope and the very perfection of elegance. Once

by her limited intelligence from entering the jousts of wit, thus while the irrepressible Madame Hamelin would keep up an incessant fire of repartee, accompanying her sallies with gestures of "appropriate" impropriety, Theresia could rely for her conquests only on the voluptuous contour of her limbs, the alluring softness of her meaning smiles, or the tuneful laugh of which she was the more prodigal since it half revealed two rows of the daintiest pearls within the crimson casket of her sensuous lips.

only did I see her dancing an English dance, and then she walked rather than danced. At her own house, La Chaumière de Chaillot, she used, to entertain, but she gave no balls. Card-playing for very high stakes went on there, with supper-parties and dinner-parties, and that was how the time was sped."—"Les Salons de Paris," vol. iii, pp. 99-100.

The Duchesse d'Abrantès states that she never saw Theresia dance but once, and she therefore concludes that she was not in the habit of dancing, but this is wrong, for there is a great deal of evidence to the contrary. Before her marriage with Monsieur de Fontenay and up to the time of her departure for Bordeaux during the Terror, and later on under the Directoire at the Luxembourg, she not only danced a great deal but excited much admiration on account of the voluptuous grace with which she took part in an exercise so well calculated to win her homage and admiration. Nevertheless, it is quite probable that she danced but little at the Bal Thélusson.

Speaking, in her *Mémoires*, of the Bal Thélusson, the Duchesse d'Abrantès gives us another little sketch of Madame Tallien.

"Her height," she says, "was rather above the average, but so absolutely perfect were all her proportions that the drawbacks under which unusually tall women generally labour were not noticeable in her. She was a veritable Venus of the Capitol, nay, even lovelier than the work of Phidias, for besides possessing the same purity of feature, the same perfect arms, hands and feet, the whole was illumined by an expression of sweet amiability, the reflection of the soul's magic mirror which told of all that lay hid in the depths of her soul, and that all was goodness. She owed nothing of her beauty to her dress, for she wore a plain gown of Indian muslin draped in classic fashion and fastened at the shoulders with a couple of cameos and drawn in at the waist by means of a golden girdle which also had a cameo clasp. A broad golden armlet caught up and held her sleeve a good way above the elbow. Her hair, which was of a velvety blackness, was short and clustered in little ringlets about her head—à la Titus the fashion was called. Upon her beautiful white shoulders she wore a splendid shawl of red cashmere, a material which, at this date, was still exceedingly rare and very much in demand. She gathered it round her in a way that was invariably charming and picturesque, and presented the most ravishing picture."

The warring aims of the rival political factions concerned her not at all. Now and again she would go out of her way to put forward the claims of some suppliant who had solicited her interest—but that was all. One can readily imagine that Barras would not have any “*Notre Dame de Bon Secours*” foolery from his mistress, and that he set his face still more sternly against any meddling with politics on her part, though in all probability she was too completely absorbed by her flirtations and the preservation of her charms to have any thoughts to bestow on such matters.

Her one preoccupation, apart from that of exciting admiration, was to maintain her position at the Court of the Luxembourg. With that end in view she endeavoured to shape her policy in such a manner that her own triumphs should contribute to exalt the position of Barras. With truly remarkable complaisance she readily condoned his almost daily infidelities, of which he told her all the details and at whose transient nature he himself was the first to mock.

The insipid monotony of this period of Theresia's career, of her life from 1795 to 1800, has left no trace behind it save in the recollections of her immediate acquaintance, and for the most part those recollections harp with little variation on her beauty, the eccentricity and impropriety of her mode of dress—or rather undress—and the shameless indecorum of her conduct.

From the uniformity of the judgments passed upon her it is clear that her serenity of demeanour arose from her utter lack of moral consciousness. Probably the continual and wildly extravagant flattery which had been showered upon her from her childhood had at length impressed her with the belief that she was different from the rest of her kind, and that as her sovereignty knew no limit so too it knew no law.

And Tallien, what was he thinking about, what was

he saying and doing during these four years? Little enough it would seem. In the Council of Five Hundred; whereof he had been a member since its formation, he showed no initiative, he effected nothing; but what else could be expected of such an ignorant sluggard? He was too incompetent to be trusted to play a part in an intrigue or a political *coup de main*, and nobody dreamed of employing him. On the contrary, people displayed a marked tendency to give a wide berth to so discredited and compromising an acquaintance. Such relations as they did enter into with him were wholly concerned with matters of business, and the only instance in which we find him playing any considerable and sustained part is connected with the position he held in the Compagnie Ouen, into which he was doubtless indebted for his entrée to Fouché and Réal, Madame de Chastenay's protector.*

Nevertheless, between 1796 and 1798 he strove, sometimes singlehanded, sometimes with the co-operation of Barras, to carry on his Royalist machinations. The Director was wavering, and continued to waver, between the Royalists and the Republican irreconcilables (revolutionaries who were still animated by the principles of

* Madame de Chastenay, who bears a striking resemblance to Madame de Genlis—whom as a matter of fact she knew and to whom she owed a part of her education—was on very close terms with Réal and was acquainted with many other people prominent during the Revolution and the Directoire, such, for example, as Fouché, Sotin, Barras, &c. She was in the habit of attending the receptions at the Luxembourg, though she always avoided mixing herself up too closely with the women of the Directoire Court. Although there is no intrigue that we know of to sully her fair fame, she mingled too freely with this demoralised and licentious set to be altogether above suspicion. The unwearying diligence with which she plied all who could be of service to herself, her relatives or her friends, clearly reveals her as an industrious schemer during the Revolution and the Directoire, and explains the excessive indulgence displayed by her in the case of the potentates of the Revolution. For this reason it is impossible to rely on her statements regarding people to whom she was under such great obligations. The fact that her own interests always entered into the matter renders her Memoirs valueless.

1793) till he at length fell a prey to the Corsican Ogre whose aid he had but too insistently invoked.

Amid these uncertainties Tallien at first found himself at one with Barras in the desire to bring about the return of the monarchy, and his alliance with Barras tended to impart some strength to his feeble credit with the Royalist leaders. Barras, however, had but a half-hearted confidence in the potentialities of the scheme, and the end of the matter was that he adopted the subtler views of Fouché and Sieyès, who pinned their whole faith to the policy of the mailed fist and were on the lookout for some military man whom they might use as a tool for the furtherance of their own designs. Meanwhile, Bonaparte, who was astute enough to keep on good terms with them, was preparing the move that was destined to checkmate them all. Tallien, seeing that Barras was becoming increasingly disposed to leave him in the lurch, now perceived that he had connived at his wife's infidelity to no purpose.

The coup d'état of the 18th Fructidor (September 4, 1797), called forth by the rashness of the Monarchists, who raised the song of victory ere the battle had well begun, compelled the ex-Septembriseur to moderate his Royalist zeal. At length the reverses which befell him in the Year VI, when he was twice elected and twice unseated, rendered his position hopeless. Politically speaking he had run his race.

Upon his domestic life during this period no documents throw any light. Such writers as make mention of the Talliens confine themselves to vaguely complimentary observations. Led on by an unquestioning belief in the Thermidorian legend, they make much of the devoted attachment subsisting between Tallien and Theresia, and then proceed to admit that the flame burnt itself out in no long time after the marriage. It is certainly undeniable that from the middle of 1795 la belle Tallien

had no love for her husband, and that no one occupied less space in her thoughts than he. But those who represent the *Septembriseur* in the light of a constant lover, who would have us regard him as always doting on his wife, advance a view of the man totally at variance with what we know of his psychology and his vanity.

One document, and only one, a letter which Tallien wrote to his wife from Egypt, contains a few phrases which at first sight appear to lend some colour to this view. We shall deal with this letter in its due chronological order, and it will be seen that one only has to submit it to a careful analysis to avoid the error of crediting Tallien with the possession of any remnants of affection for his wife in the year 1798. There was no question of love between them. When Tallien married *Notre Dame de Thermidor* at the end of 1794 he simply looked upon the matter as a stroke of business. Before the end of the following year he recognised the futility of the move, but as a divorce would have done nothing to retrieve the error he pocketed his vexation.

We may take it for granted that up to the 9th Thermidor, Year III, he still retained a certain amount of prestige in the eyes of Theresia, but after his return from Quiberon the hollowness of his triumph at the Convention opened her eyes and finally dispelled her illusions. She built no more hopes on him but threw herself unblushingly into a life of gilded harlotry.

Though her conduct now became a public scandal, we know nothing of what passed between husband and wife in private. But, though there is no direct evidence, it is open to us to make some likely deductions which indirect but convergent probabilities practically convert into certainties.

Tallien was well aware of his wife's irregularities ; they were everywhere notorious, and not a newspaper but made

them the subject of mocking comment or bitter condemnation. Had he cared for Theresia he would never have ignored the scandal. The mere fact that he tolerated such a state of affairs is proof positive that he had no affection for her.

Love is a noble sentiment, and a keen sense of honour is one of its concomitants. But to none of the journalists, pamphleteers or slanderers who spoke of his wife as of the veriest wanton, who described her as more despicable than the lowest trull in the rue du Pélican or the rue Jean Saint Denis, did Tallien throw down the gauntlet. Again and again his wife was publicly pilloried, but whether the attack came from the prurient columns of the gutter press or from the rostrum of the Convention, Tallien suffered it to pass unheeded, unavenged. How could he have loved his wife if he would not venture a blow in her defence? He was a poltroon, we know; but at any rate his poltroonery would not have prevented him from upbraiding or chastising *her*. He did not love her, but a coward can have passion, and passion is a long way from being incompatible with violence. Tallien was no trembling milksop cowering before some ill-conditioned virago. On the contrary, he was a strapping fellow with plenty of brawn and sinew, and, besides that, Theresia had already felt the weight of his wrath at Bordeaux, so much so indeed that she had had to take to her bed. This we know because, weeping and whimpering, she gave an account—albeit a somewhat glorified one—of her misadventure to the Marquise de Lage de Volude.

But Tallien made no scandal. He had none of those noisy altercations with his wife that create such a sensation in the servants' hall, the occupants of which are only too eager to publish the news to the world at large.

Nevertheless, Tallien's vanity must have been sorely wounded, of that there can be no doubt. The fact that early in 1797 Theresia took the preliminary steps to

obtain a divorce is sufficient proof that his ill-humour had been productive of serious discord between them.

Petrus Durel, in a monograph entitled *Madame Tallien*, has in fact published the documents relating to these tentative proceedings, documents for which he was indebted to Maître Laguerre, whose father had held a post in the office of Maître Dufour, the lawyer to whom la belle Tallien had entrusted her case. From these papers we learn that on the 18th Ventôse, Year V (March 8, 1797), Citoyenne Theresia Cabarrus, the wife of Jean Lambert Tallien of No. 1 rue des Gourdes, Chaillot, near the Barrière de la Conférence, through the Citoyen Dufour, lawyer of 284 rue Montmartre near the rue du Jour, Paris, sued her husband for divorce.

“ The Citoyenne Cabarrus in accordance with the writ dated the 8th instant served on Citoyen Tallien, with the reservations mentioned therein and repeating so far as is necessary the declarations therein made, makes application by these presents for divorce from the said Jean Lambert Tallien, now her husband, on account of incompatibility of temper and disposition. And to constitute the council of relatives and friends required by law in cases of this nature appoints on her side the following :

“ 1. Citoyen Paulin Lalanne of No. 12 rue Vivienne, Paris; her uncle.

“ 2. Barthélemy Cabarrus of No. 27 rue de la Révolution, Paris, merchant, relative.*

“ 3. Citoyen Jean Baptiste Servat of No. 12 rue Meslée, Paris, friend.

“ This latter is chosen in default of further relatives, and the above will, in consequence of the ratification of these presents, meet together on the nineteenth day of

* The Citoyen Barthélemy Cabarrus, Theresia's uncle, mentioned in this document, filed his petition five years later and died, so Petrus Durel informs us, a few years afterwards.

Germinal next at nine o'clock P.M. in the presence of the officer de l'état civil of the first municipal arrondissement of Paris, at his office situate in the Place Beauvau, there to assemble in family council and they undertake to find substitutes for such as may not attend. Whereof let the Citoyen Tallien take due note and let him accordingly, if he so determine, present himself at the place and hour aforesaid, and there cause to be present three relatives or friends in order that they, together with those of the Citoyenne Cabarrus, may make up the Council hereby convened. And of these presents I have left a copy with each of the above-named.

(signed) "BARBIER.

"Registered in Paris, 18th Ventôse, Year V." *

Thus, two years and three months after her marriage, we find Theresia living on such bad terms with Tallien that she was for leaving the conjugal residence, la Chaumière, and instructing her lawyer, Maître Dufour, to institute proceedings for divorce. But these preliminary measures had no sequel. Shortly afterwards, a temporary reconciliation took place between the two parties, and an examination of the letter in which Theresia conveyed the news of this decision to Maître Dufour leaves no room for doubt that the concessions were all made by Tallien. This is how the letter runs :

"La Chaumière, No. 1 rue des Gourdes.

"I am back in my home again, Monsieur. The urgent recommendations of my friends, the hope of living more peacefully in future and the absolute need of rest are the causes that have brought about my return. Nevertheless, I have only come back on the express condition, a condition to which Tallien himself has assented, that the divorce proceedings should continue till I have clear

* Petrus Durel, *Madame Tallien*, pp. 67-70.

proof that their abandonment would conduce to the happiness of both of us. This course, it appears to me, will set everything to rights; the slanders that have been called forth will be swept away, while the experience of the two months that must elapse before our first appearance in court will, if the severance must take place, enable us to obtain our divorce quietly and by mutual consent. I am anxious, Monsieur, to talk this matter over with you at greater length. Please be so kind as to tell me whether you will be able to come and see me here or, if not, at what time I may call at your office. The sooner the better.

“ I am, &c. &c.,

“ THERESIA CABARRUS TALLIEN.”

In this letter Theresia makes it clear that she is yielding to the representations of her friends (or her husband's friends) in thus attempting to resume marital relations with Tallien. But she undertook this step solely on condition that he made no further attempt to worry her in any manner whatever, that he left her absolutely free to do as she liked—even to deceive him apparently, since she made no effort to conceal her liaison with Barras. In view of the possibility of her husband displaying a disinclination to remain accommodating, the divorce proceedings were to pursue their course, and were only to cease if two months' experience clearly proved to the plaintiff that she might absolutely rely on the complete and enduring docility of her husband.*

* In his *Madame Tallien* Petrus Durel quotes the following extract from *La Petite Poste*, dated the 30th Nivôse, Year V.

“ At two o'clock this morning, Madame T. . . . who was returning from a grand ball, was attacked near her residence, ‘ La Chaumière,’ by some of the ruffians who infest the Champs Elysées. Just as the robbers were opening the door of her carriage, a young admirer of hers, who had been following her in his cabriolet, rushed upon the scene and, pointing a couple of pistols at the scoundrels, put them to flight. Moved to tears at this proof of the young man's solicitude for her welfare, Madame T. . . . insisted on his driving home with her. Report has it that he did not leave the house till noon on the following day.”

It would not be easy to imagine a more humiliating position for a husband, and we may inquire how a man of Tallien's vanity could possibly put up with it. But we must here take account of a ruling factor in the situation which has hitherto been passed over, namely; the question of money, the financial position.

The multitudinous financial enterprises into which he plunged are a sure indication that Tallien had nearly exhausted the funds amassed by him as a result of the process of extortion which he had carried on up to the very end of his sojourn in the Gironde.

There is no doubt that the beginning of the year 1796 found him in considerable straits, for he had had no opportunity of practising the arts of pillage or treason on a sufficiently large or remunerative scale to enable him to make good the enormous breaches that his costly establishment and the ruinous extravagances of his wife had made in his "robber's hoard."

Taking no heed for the morrow, and, like the generality of gamblers, an incorrigible spendthrift, this shoddy adventurer trembled when he saw that in no long time he would have nothing but his stipend as a deputy wherewith to meet his personal expenses, a purpose for which such meagre resources were totally inadequate.

Let us for a moment see exactly how the Talliens stood at this period. Theresia's property, which consisted almost entirely of real estate, was no more saleable in 1796 or 1797 than it had been at any time during the two preceding years. In Spain, her father, François Cabarrus, had been restored to favour, but he seems to have shown no disposition to pay his daughter's expenses. Nowhere indeed do we find that the financier ever displayed the least generosity towards la belle Tallien.

Theresia, however, showed no inclination to diminish her inordinate expenditure. The reverse was in fact the case. As her notoriety increased her extravagance

increased with it. When Tallien's purse was empty, some time in 1796, she had perforce to look about for other means to meet her expenditure, and there was nothing for it but to obtain from her "amis" the vast sums she squandered on dress and all the host of trivial extravagances which she refused to forgo.

The Terrorist, being now out of employment, lived, partly at all events, at her expense until his deputy's pay ceased to come in and until adverse decisions regarding his election in Year VI deprived him not only of this last remaining resource but also of the hope of bringing off any profitable financial deals.

The exhibitions of immorality which characterised the Tallien household at Gros Bois, exhibitions which Petrus Durel mentions in his *Madame Tallien*, are, it would appear, to be assigned to a period anterior to this financial catastrophe.

Barras, so the tale goes, had conceived the idea of mating the Septembriseur to Pauline de Tayfonne, one of his favourites, while he himself appeared as the lover of a young widow named Adrienne Audricourt, and a third gallant, one Duquesnoy, appeared as the successful suitor to the hand of a certain Madame Sophie Courcelles.

This amorous sextet appears to have daily brought blushes to the cheeks of the virtuous inhabitants of Gros Bois; and la belle Tallien, we are told, took a special delight in helping on these irregular doings, perhaps because she thought they would furnish her with an excuse for her own misdeeds.

It would serve no useful purpose to go into further detail regarding those minor saturnalia which, so far as Tallien was concerned, could not have lasted long, since his political and financial overthrow did not suffer him to pursue them, as did his wife and Barras, until the Directoire came to an end. When, however, his resources became inadequate to the Gros Bois orgies, he was not

above seeking distraction in female society of a much less refined description. But even when his funds would not permit him to continue his attentions to such divinities as Pauline de Tayfonne, he went on pretending to disdain the charms of the famous and lovely Theresia in order that he might look as little of a fool and as much of a man as possible. Like the fox in the fable—and like his predecessor the sham Marquis de Fontenay—he affected to look slightly on his “treasure” without telling any one that it was his “treasure” who would have nothing to do with him. That he played his wife false there is no doubt. Every one knew it, and he intended that they should.

De Fontenay, says Devin, betrayed what he had sprung from when he “kept” a shop-girl under the conjugal roof, and similarly, Tallien revealed his origin when, in order to play the faithless husband, he went a-wenching with trollops willing to sell their charms dirt cheap to any one who cared to buy them for a night or an hour.

But a time came when these nauseous distractions were denied him (for though Theresia might give him food and shelter she certainly would not have supplied him with pocket-money to squander on such creatures as these), when he could no longer gamble to forget his enforced continence, when it was not even open to him to seek oblivion in the wines of the Directoire Queen, for she would not have tolerated such grossness in her house, and then he had nothing for it but to beg permission to join the Egyptian expedition.

Whether this latter idea was his or whether it emanated from Theresia is a matter of some doubt. It scarcely seems to come within the natural order of ideas so far as Tallien was concerned, whereas it may quite well have suggested itself to Theresia as a result of her intimate friendship with Josephine Bonaparte. A brief survey of the latter’s life since her marriage to General Vendémiaire will make this clear.

As we have seen, Bonaparte was compelled immediately after his marriage to leave his bride and assume command of the army operating in Italy. For some months previously, however, he had obtained from Josephine all that she had it in her power to give him. Nevertheless, his anticipated honeymoon was not at an end, and when he set out in March 1796 his passion for his wife was still at its zenith. Thus much the burning letters he wrote her sufficiently establish. The fact that the object of his affections made a far stronger appeal to his senses * than either to his head or his heart lent additional energy to the young Corsican's passionate protestations. The army they had given him had no proper equipment: † money, clothes and rations alike were lacking.‡ But what of that! Showing a superb

* In his work "Napoléon et les femmes," F. Masson quotes several of Bonaparte's early letters to Josephine: they leave no room for doubt as to the essentially physical nature of the attraction. The Emperor's first wife clearly made the strongest appeal to the sensual part of his nature. As far as brains were concerned she was too greatly his inferior to have exerted any intellectual influence over him, while her own wanderings from the path of conjugal virtue were too numerous to make faithfulness appear a very important duty in his eyes. But she was kind, oh, very kind, such she had always proved herself, and with her he had for the first time in his life attained the summit of passionate delight. His recollections of these joys had spurred him to perform prodigies in the Italian campaign, and his gratitude to her was greater than one would have believed possible.

† The following is Marmont's account of the army that was sent to Italy: "His troops—I mean that part of his army which was available to go into action—consisted of fifty-nine battalions and twenty-nine squadrons, numbering in all twenty-eight thousand eight hundred and twenty foot, half-starved and without boots to their feet, but they were twenty-eight thousand veterans, brave fellows, old campaigners accustomed to victory, who had triumphed in many a conflict over the same foe with whom they were now face to face. Besides this, they had vanquished the Spaniards whom they had forced to sue for peace, and the victory of Loano was still green in their recollection." Duc de Raguse, *Mémoires*.

‡ Napoleon never forgot the dreadful misery that had afflicted the first army he had had under his command, nor, and with reason, did he ever forgive the Directoire and the contractors who had been responsible for it.

superiority to circumstances, Bonaparte communicated to his men the fire of his own enthusiasm, and compelled them to carry all before them in a series of irresistible onslaughts. Scarcely had he set his hand to the reduction of Piedmont, no sooner had he carried the day at Montenoth, Millesimo, Dego and Mondovi—all of which were fought between April 12 and 22, 1796—than he begged his beloved to come to him, for, thanks to his victories, he could now offer her greater comforts than at the beginning of the campaign.

But to quit Paris, to exchange her life of ease and pleasure in order to go roughing it with an army on active service, scarcely consorted with her notions, and she had recourse to all the arts of procrastination to evade the necessity of complying with his passionate behests.

Bonaparte was now involved in a network of obstacles from which his sole means of finding an issue was to assume the offensive with redoubled vigour. On May 10 he began the conquest of Lombardy; on the 14th he was in Milan, and he summoned his wife to join him there with passionate vehemence.

Leave Paris! The thing was heart-breaking. Josephine could not make up her mind to obey. She said she wasn't well, she thought she must be in an interesting condition. This piece of news calmed him a little—he begged pardon for his impatience. But behold, Junot and Marat came upon the scene. They tell how passionately Bonaparte longed to have her at his side.

They found her in perfectly good health, and eagerly taking part in all the festivities organised by Barras in honour of their arrival. Further pretence was out of the question: her departure could be postponed no longer.

She set out dreadfully sick at heart. Among the people who accompanied her, however, was an officer named Charles, an amusing, lively fellow, and a terrible

lady-killer. It fell to this gentleman's lot to beguile the tedium of the evening hours, and so skilfully did he minister to the amusement of his fair travelling companion that the journey began to drag out a little unnecessarily.

At length, on July 8, Madame Bonaparte found herself in the neighbourhood of Milan. Husband and wife were united again at last. What transports of delight in the triumphant general's quarters !

Monsieur Charles, who was apparently not in good odour, was quickly sent packing, and then, to help her bear the fatigues and trials of camp life—whereof she did not conceal her abhorrence—it began veritably to rain presents and luxuries and honours for Josephine.

A year went by, and it was in vain that Bonaparte laid the Goddess of Victory herself under contribution, joyfully casting at Josephine's dainty feet whole armfuls of triumphant laurels. Her husband's glory failed to obliterate her longings for the Capital. His triumphs at Lonato (July 30–August 4, 1796) were repeated at Castiglione (August 4), at Roveredo (September 3), Barsano (September 8), and San Giorgio (September 15). Even Arcola (November 15–17) did not avail to console her.

On February 2, 1797, Mantua gave in, the Pope signed the Treaty of Tolentino (by it Bonaparte obtained thirty million francs for the Republic, by way of indemnity). On April 18, Napoleon, like a veritable monarch, put his hand to the preliminaries of a treaty of peace with Austria. Soon afterwards Venice was brought to her knees. But what did she—Josephine—make of it all ? Had it any significance for her ? did it please her ? did it flatter her ? Alas ! it all passed before her eyes like some fair but incomprehensible scene from fairyland. It was all very pleasant, very amusing ; but still she would much rather have been in

Paris. It was on Paris that her mind was running, and on the gaieties that she would enjoy on her return ; and she arranged by letter for the Hôtel Chantierine to be altered, decorated, and furnished anew at a cost of no less than 120,000 francs—a figure which throws a light on the large sums Bonaparte's campaigns had enabled him to amass for his private uses.

Meanwhile, Madame Bonaparte beguiled the hours by gazing lovingly on the jewels which the General had given her, or which she had received from other hands without her husband's knowledge, for he had forbidden her to accept the presents which so many influential Italians were anxious to bestow, thinking to conciliate the husband through the medium of the wife. When, at length, the time came for her to depart, she bore away with her a collection of jewels of which she afterwards boasted—and with reason—that it had not its fellow in the world.

In Paris, meantime, Theresia, who had been entering more whole-heartedly than ever into her rôle of demirep Queen of the Directoire, was tactless enough to declare in the hearing of Carnot's brother that she did not understand why they needed five people at the head of the Government : one (*i.e.* Barras) would be quite sufficient.

The remark was characteristic. It also throws a light on Josephine's estimate of her husband. As yet she had not in the least realised how powerful a personality Bonaparte was, and probably regarded Madame Tallien's seeming sovereignty with immense envy, little dreaming of the imperial diadem that the future had in store for her.

But, behold, the sixth year of the Republic had come, and Bonaparte, after signing the Treaty of Campo Formio on October 17, had hurried back to Paris ; however, Josephine was not at his side as he entered the Capital. She had gone to pay a little visit to Rome, which, to say the least of it, was singular.



JOSEPHINE IMPÉRATRICE DES FRANÇAIS

With regard to this extraordinary freak—some love-affair was probably at the bottom of it—we need only remark that Josephine was not long away. She was soon back again in her beloved Paris. At this time la belle Tallien was still most cordially received at the mansion in the rue Chantereine, recently re-christened the “rue de la Victoire” in honour of the conqueror of Italy.

In the winter of 1797 Josephine found herself once more in full enjoyment of those delights of the Directoire society from which she had so long been sundered.

Bonaparte had put down the 120,000 francs for furnishing their mansion just as freely as, in Germinal (year VI), he parted with a further 52,400 francs to purchase the mansion itself.

Indubitably his finances were already in a very flourishing condition; but he refrained from making a parade either of his wealth or his achievements, and manifested no joy at the fête officially held to commemorate his victories and his treaties. Perceiving that, despite these external displays of approval, he was in reality by no means *persona grata* with the powers that were, he had the great good sense to lie low, and there was nothing to hinder Madame Bonaparte from continuing to nourish the delusion that the real seat of authority was the Directorial Government.

Nevertheless, master of the situation though he was, he had the wisdom to recognise that his hour had not yet come, and that it was still expedient for him to dissemble.

The sole recompense that he begged for his services was the permission to carry out a military expedition against Egypt, and to this Barras was so foolish as to agree, never reflecting that the General would be astute enough to leave his two brothers behind him in Paris, plentifully furnished with funds and instructions to prepare the ground for his return, and to enable him

when the psychological moment should arrive, to possess himself of the supreme power in the State.

Preparations for the expedition were carried out with the absolute secrecy that was so essential to its success. The risk Bonaparte ran of meeting defeat and death at sea did not trouble Barras in the smallest degree ; quite possibly he even desired that this should be the end of the undertaking. But he recognised that, at any rate, it was necessary for Bonaparte to reach the high seas without giving the alarm to Nelson.

Thus every one was kept in the dark concerning Bonaparte's objective, and the excellent manner in which the secret was kept proves that it was shared by a very few. It was generally given out that an attack was to be made on Portugal or Ireland.

That Tallien therefore made no request to accompany the expedition is explained by the simple fact that he knew nothing about it. Even if he had been in the secret, he would never have dreamt of making such an application, since there was no post that he was qualified to fill. When, shortly afterwards, his departure was decided upon, the problem was to discover what duties could possibly be assigned to him, to imagine what in the world could be found for him to do in Egypt. To make a soldier of such a poltroon was quite out of the question ; moreover, he was so utterly destitute of military knowledge that he could not have discharged the duties of the merest subaltern. As the expeditionary force consisted solely of fighting men, the difficulty appeared incapable of solution. Who was the brilliant individual that at the eleventh hour contrived to cut the Gordian knot ? Whoever it was must have been—man or woman—a very ignorant person ; such an idea could only have occurred to some such scatterbrain as Josephine or Theresia. *He was to go as a savant !* As a matter of fact, a certain number of eminent scientists were to

accompany the expedition, and of such men as Monge, Geoffroy, Saint-Hilaire, Fourier, Berthollet, and Dommieux, Tallien forsooth was to become the colleague !

At length, on May 19, 1798, the fleet sailed out of Toulon Harbour. None knew whither it was bound, Even among those who actually took part in the expedition the majority were in a similar state of ignorance as late as forty-one days afterwards when the fleet left Malta, where it had put in *en route* in order that France might be the richer by the acquisition of a valuable naval base (June 10, 1798). In this connexion Kléber made the following entry in his notebook :

“ We sailed out of the harbour on the 30th Prairial, and there were not forty people on board who knew what course we were going to steer. Blanquet (the rear-admiral in charge of the squadron) inveighed against the idea of an expedition to Egypt ; he was anxious to make for the Crimea ; others would have preferred Morea, others Sicily, and a few Portugal, although we had sailed too far East for that. . . .”

On July 2, 1798 (14th Messidor, year VI), the army of Egypt reached its destination, disembarked, and fought the engagement of Aboukir. It was not until the 7th of the ensuing Thermidor—that is to say, about twenty-three days later—that Tallien set foot in the land of the Pharaohs. But, taking into account that he had not had to put in at Malta as the squadron had done, nor to go out of his way in order to elude Nelson and his fleet, we may calculate that the expeditionary forces had a good month's start of him ; this would bring his departure from France to somewhere about the end of June.

Though Barras was extremely careful to maintain silence regarding the Egyptian expedition until it was well under way, there is every probability that he discussed the matter with Theresia and Josephine during

he first fortnight in June. We may be quite sure that Bonaparte had already become too well aware of his wife's babbling propensities to trust her with so important a State secret as that relating to his expedition. He recognised that his political and military career, and possibly his life, were dependent upon the success of the enterprise. We may therefore take it for granted that, when Josephine accompanied her husband to Toulon, she was unaware of his real aims, and that she thought, in common with every one else, that he was bound for Portugal or Ireland.*

* At this time (a few weeks before his departure for Egypt) Bonaparte was as fond of his wife as his particular disposition and the gigantic tasks which he had undertaken, and to which he devoted all the energies of his intellect, permitted him to be. Yes, there is no doubt that he *did* love Josephine. Nevertheless, people who state that he loved her more deeply than he loved any other woman are not acquainted with the details of his whole career. Many years ago, had they followed his movements closely, they might have seen him helpless in the turmoil of a headstrong and romantic passion. They might have beheld him blushing and growing pale, quivering in every limb, and even shedding tears. There was a certain box at the old Théâtre Feydeau—11 was the number of it—that could have whispered many a pretty secret about the matter.

His love for his wife was not of that kind. He loved her, no doubt ; but he did not see in her one of those divinities who will enthral even your most practical minded man, and prevent him from allowing the existence of even the smallest blemish of form or character in the object of his affections. There was, in his love potion, an ingredient which tended to moderate its intoxicating effect. I allude to the obligations which particularly, at the date of his return from Italy, Bonaparte was popularly supposed to owe his wife.

Madame Bonaparte demonstrated her utter tactlessness not only in failing to exact silence from the people who gave currency to this report, but also in giving it substance by the secrets she was everlastingly reposing in a whole host of sycophants and schemers whose promises of silence never endured for more than an hour. I know that Bonaparte was told of the imprimature, as it were, which was given by Madame Bonaparte to the foolish rumour which Napoleon's enemies—and he already numbered plenty of them—were spreading abroad respecting him. We may judge, therefore, whether or no Bonaparte was mortified when he found people regarding him with a supercilious air, and when he heard people whispering, "It's all due to his wife that he is able to keep his head above water." The thing was absurdly untrue ; but, still, it was said, and all who knew Bonaparte well must be aware that it was quite enough to affect him to a remarkable degree. What

Theresia, then on terms of the closest friendship with her, saw her almost every day at the Luxembourg, and possibly submitted with a good grace to being occasionally supplanted by her in the Director's attentions.

Every one was agog to know the nature of the adventure that Bonaparte had on hand. There was something undeniably mysterious in the fleet thus setting sail without any announcement as to its destination, and the popular imagination became still further inflamed with curiosity when the days went by and brought no news of its having passed through the Straits of Gibraltar. When the capture of Malta became generally known—to withhold it for long was impossible—it grew pretty evident that Bonaparte was bound for the East. It even appeared tolerably certain that he had designs on Egypt, seeing that Nelson, arriving off the conquered island shortly after the French squadron had left, hurried away with his fourteen line-of-battleships to Alexandria.

There was now nothing to prevent Barras from openly avowing to Josephine or Theresia that Bonaparte's force was to operate in the East, for, at this juncture, such a

I am here stating are not baseless allegations, as I will abundantly prove when we reach the period of the Consulate.

Bonaparte knew how inconsequent his wife was, and he always particularly enjoined upon her never to discuss politics—a subject of which she knew nothing, and which was bound to lead her into delivering herself of utterances that might make matters awkward for him.

"The things you say," he would often tell her, "are looked upon as coming from me. Say nothing, and my enemies—and they are about you everywhere—will not be able to draw silly inferences from what you tell them."

Farther on, the Duchesse d'Abrantès adds :

"Madame Bonaparte's most conspicuous characteristic was a futile irresponsibility, united with a certain air of bonhomie. Monsieur de Caulaincourt soon fell into disfavour, though the excellent man never suspected it ; and when, subsequently, by reason of his marriage, I became one of the inner circle at the Tuileries, I did not upset him by telling him that he was dubbed a dotard."

But Madame d'Abrantès makes no secret of the fact that his family detested Josephine.

statement could have had no untoward effect on the progress of events. As for the two women, the East seemed like the other end of the world to them. As one may readily imagine, Josephine was in no mood to quarrel with an arrangement that promised her such a prolonged "holiday." Theresia must have told her what a lucky woman she was, and how greatly she envied her. But why envy her? we may ask. Wasn't she absolutely free, in spite of Tallien? Free, in a manner she certainly was; but she bore the weight of a burden as useless as it was ignoble, for the Terrorist accepted with a cynicism only equalled by the effrontery with which his wife had played him false, the rôle of the discarded husband. Ah! why couldn't he, too, go and bury himself at the other end of the world? There, then, we have it! We see how naturally the idea of sending Tallien off to join Bonaparte's expedition may have suggested itself to the two friends.

As for the Terrorist, we may take it that he demurred a little at the outset. Though he was at the moment without employment, he was at home, in Paris; he knew the ins and outs of Republican politics; he could perhaps consider himself something of a journalist. But of the East he knew nothing, and as for matters of science, he recognised to the full that he was an utter ignoramus.

Whatever may have been the temporary effect of these considerations upon Theresia, that effect was quite obliterated by the convincing arguments which Josephine was able to adduce to counteract it.

She had not failed to note the lordly and masterful fashion in which Bonaparte exacted tribute from the conquered states, and the liberality with which he distributed among his assistants the spoils of the vanquished. We can almost hear her telling Tallien that he could consider himself a made man if he went and joined Bonaparte.

Willy-nilly the Septembriseur had to fall in with the proposal and to submit—for a time at least—to be banished from his native land. His wife and Josephine both brought their influence to bear on Barras, and that permission to join the expedition proceeded from Barras and not from Bonaparte is clearly proved by the fact that, on the eve of his departure, Tallien, who, for some time past, had not been suffered to show his face at the Luxembourg, publicly appeared at the residence of his wife's paramour to thank him for the post that had been conferred upon him.

Let us now follow Tallien's course until his arrival in Egypt.

In his *Souvenirs d'un Sexagénaire* Arnaud has recorded that, when he was on his way home from Malta to France, he encountered, somewhere near the island of Pantelleria, between Tunis and Sicily, the little vessel that had put out from Toulon with Tallien on board. The two ships passed within hailing distance of each other, and Arnaud reports that the Terrorist told him he was going out fortune hunting in Egypt—words which clearly convey the sort of hopes which Josephine and Theresia had instilled into his breast.

By the 7th Thermidor, year VI (July 25, 1798), or thereabouts, the traveller had reached his destination, for in the *Journal des Opérations du Général Kléber*, we find the following note entered under that date :

“ In the evening, General Lannes, several officers, and, with them, Tallien, arrived from France, and proceeded to pay their respects to the General. The arrival of the last-mentioned caused some surprise, one might almost say displeasure. It was generally supposed that, as he had been entrusted with no special duties—at all events, by the Government—he must have come to Egypt simply for his own ends, a view that was supported by the fact that he had been contractor-

general to the army intended for service in England as well as to the army operating in the East. Some Frenchmen openly gave expression to their apprehension that Egypt might become another dumping-ground for people who had got into the Government's bad books, or of such as found it expedient to throw a veil over their past."

This note, penned by an officer belonging to Kléber's General Staff, does not deal particularly gently with Tallien. We learn from it, moreover, that Tallien had been one of the contractors to the forces intended for service against England (General Hoche's expedition against Ireland), as well as to the army of the East, though, as it was a secret, he could have known nothing about the destination of the latter. Possibly these contracts were among the transactions of the *Compagnie Ouen*. At all events, the way they were carried out did not create any prejudice in Tallien's favour, and if the material supplied in this instance was no better than that furnished in the other case, Tallien must have found himself under the uncomfortable necessity of being the immediate target of complaints to which his negligence or his bad faith had given rise.

Whoever it was who wrote Kléber's journal, he says nothing about Tallien's having been sent out as a *savant*. It may have passed muster as a pretext for his despatch; but he could hardly have kept up the farce in Egypt among men of genuine scientific distinction, such as Berthollet, Monge, and Dolomieux.

The conclusion of the note of the 7th Thermidor was especially "rough" on the ex-Terrorist. Nevertheless, it does not overstate the contempt in which Tallien was held by Kléber's entourage: witness the severity of the diatribes which were indirectly aimed at him the very next day, the 8th Thermidor.

"Tallien dined that day at Kléber's. After the repast

was over, the conversation fell upon the armies and the Government. The General complained in vigorous terms about the manner in which they had been neglected, the exaggerated and impossible promises which were unceasingly being held out to them, and the indifference with which they were treated by people in office. He also animadverted upon the way the latter were in the habit of behaving towards generals of high ability—men of obviously greater merit than themselves; and upon the scant respect that was shown to the memory of the generals who had fallen in their country's service. Thereupon Tallien took occasion to remark that the generals had enjoyed far better treatment under the Convention. The General then attacked the bad management of that body. He represented it as a body that had fallen into corruption and disrepute. He expatiated on the awe and respect with which France, as a military power, was regarded by foreign nations, and contrasted the contempt in which the majority of her statesmen were held with the respectful admiration which the name and presence of a French officer in a foreign country never failed to evoke. Though no part of this discourse had been addressed directly to the Citoyen Tallien, he had borne such a large share in the transactions that he was bound to take as applying to himself personally the greater part of the harsh and vigorous criticisms which Kléber had directed against the Convention in general. Moreover, all the officers there present took a secret delight in regarding him as the object of the attack, and proceeded openly to voice their entire agreement with the General's views on the misdeeds of the late Government."

The General lost no opportunity of manifesting his esteem and regard for General Lannes, who had accompanied Tallien. This is unquestionably tantamount to saying that no regard and no esteem were wasted on the

Terrorist. The hostility of this reception explains the melancholy—the more than melancholy—terms of the letter which he wrote Theresia from Rosetta on the 17th Thermidor, year VI (August 4, 1798).

“ I know not, *ma chère bonne*,” says he, “ if you have received all my letters. Since I left France I have written you once from Bastia, twice from Malta, and once from Alexandria. We have been here five days waiting for a chance to get to Cairo, for it’s not safe to go up the Nile without an escort. When crossing over from Alexandria we had the good fortune to elude the English who were in these waters.

“ When you receive this letter, the news of the defeat of our squadron by the English will be generally known throughout France. We are all in a state of utter consternation here. I can give you no particulars about the matter, for we are still without any definite information. What is, however, only too certain is that the splendid ship, the *Orient*, was blown up during the engagement. From an eminence which commanded a view of the sea we were eye-witnesses of the dreadful scene. The fight went on for more than twenty-four hours, and the English must have sustained heavy losses. We do not know even now how many ships we have lost, but we are hoping against hope that the tragic rumours which are going the round will not be confirmed. Admiral Brueys was killed, as well as Ducheyla, and a host of brave fellows besides.

“ It is too early yet to give expression to any definite pronouncement regarding an event which must bring grief to the heart of every true Frenchman ; rather ought we strenuously to give the lie to slanderers who would deny respect to the hapless and to the dead. As for me, I am keeping my eyes open. I think it would be unwise to commit myself amid all this welter of conflicting passions. We are off to Cairo to-morrow, and

we shall be the first to bring the distressing intelligence to Bonaparte, who, I trust, will be able to form a just estimate of his position, and sustain with fortitude this first adverse stroke of Fortune. With regard to the effect that the news will have in France, I confess myself less easy in my mind. Even now I seem to see the enemies of Bonaparte, and of the Director who supports him, coming out into the open and stirring up public opinion against them.

“Past services will be forgotten, and every one will be wanting to claim the credit of having foretold what has come to pass. As regards myself, *ma chère amie*, I am here, as you are aware, very much against my wishes, and my position grows daily more uncomfortable. Cut off from my country and from all I hold dear, I cannot tell when I shall be united to them again. Still, I shall ever be loyal to my friends and to my duty. Fortune is at present going against Bonaparte, but that only makes me the more ready to stand staunchly by him, and to throw in my lot with him.

“Do not imagine, however, that I shall ever become the partisan of a faction. The past has taught me too much for that, and you may be sure that if, as I am very loath to think, there should ever arise a man whose aim it was to enslave his country, or who sought to use the arms of her defenders for the overthrow of liberty, you would find me in the ranks of his antagonists.

“So you see, *ma chère bonne*, that I know where my duty lies. I will, however, freely confess that I would infinitely rather be with you and your little girl, hidden away in some sequestered spot remote from the passions and intrigues of men; and I assure you that if ever I have the good fortune to set foot again upon my native soil I will never quit it more. Out of the forty thousand French who are here there are not four who do not feel as I do.

" Nothing could be more unhappy than our life here. We are without everything. For five days now I have not closed my eyes. I have to sleep on the bare ground. We are devoured by flies, lice, ants, and every species of insect, and scores of times every day I long for our delightful Chaumière. Do not part with it, *ma chère amie*, I beseech you.

" Adieu, *ma bonne* Theresia. The paper on which I write is wet with tears. The memory, the sweet memory of your kindness, of our love, and the hopes of seeing you again, of finding you ever gentle, ever true, and of embracing my beloved daughter, alone support in his affliction,

" Thine unhappy

" TALLIEN.

" Tell mother all this news. I had a loss on the journey. The day we left Malta M. Bellavoine went to sleep in some tavern, and we did not see him again. I asked Regnault to return him to me if he found him.

" Minerva is still with me, and is very well." *

At a first glance the terms of this epistle are calculated to give us a false impression of the Terrorist's sentiments, and the letter must be subjected to careful analysis if we are to arrive at its real significance.

Tallien's disposition was of the feline order. So far as appearances went there was nothing about him suggestive of cruelty or violence. When she first met him at la Chaumière, Madame de Chastenay, for example, who had some time previously sent him by letter her eulogistic congratulations *à propos* of Robespierre's overthrow, thought him gentle in his manner and apparently good-hearted. Tallien expressed regret that he was unable to render her some service she had asked of him. It was not, he said, within his power to perform it, but he offered to give her some advice—on account. Now, this is

* René Pincebourde, *Correspondance Intime de l'Armée d'Egypte*.

typical of the attitude that would be assumed by such a man towards an attractive young woman filled with enthusiasm concerning the virtues she supposed him to possess.

When, however, we reflect on the enormities of which he had been guilty as organiser of the September massacres; when we think of the part he had played at Tours and Bordeaux, when we bear in mind the people that had been shot down or murdered in cold blood at Vannes and at Auray by his orders, when we remember how in the Convention he had clamoured for men's lives—these airs and graces of the panther couchant need not deceive us in the least.

Properly to understand, and accurately to estimate; the true inwardness of the Rosetta epistle, we must not suffer ourselves to be misled by the expressions of endearment with which it opens and concludes.

All the "gush" about "ma chère bonne" and "ma bonne Theresia" was the purest make-believe, and Theresia was the last person in the world to be taken in by it. They were mere formulæ, inserted in case the letter was seen by other people. Everything, as a matter of fact, points to the letter having been written for other eyes besides Theresia's. But whose? One sentence in the letter affords a sufficient answer:

"I confess," says Tallien *à propos* of the annihilation of the French fleet by Nelson, "I confess that I am not equally easy in my mind as regards the effect the news will have in France. Even now I seem to see the enemies of Bonaparte, and of the Director who supports him, coming out into the open and stirring up public opinion against them."

How pregnant with hidden meaning is that sentence!

Why should Tallien feign to be so anxious? Because he knew that Bonaparte and Barras had arranged the Egyptian expedition quite independently of the two

Councils (the Council of Ancients and the Council of the Five Hundred).

Was, then, his rôle of savant merely a blind : had he been sent to Egypt really to play the spy in Barras' interests; and did he display, in this manner, a zeal which he calculated would one day be placed to his credit ?

Anyhow, the letter was written for Barras to see; and this explains the fond phrases of the cuckold husband. He affected to know nothing ; he pretended that he loved his wife, that he believed her faithful, that he longed to live with her and his daughter in some sequestered spot far from the passions and intrigues of men, because any other attitude would have been impossible to him in a letter written in such circumstances. Had he not simulated ignorance of the true relations existing between Barras and his wife he would have cut altogether too miserably abject a figure.

He complains that, of the forty thousand of his fellow countrymen who had been flung out on the shores of Egypt, there were not four who did not agree with him in wishing they had never come. Was not the effect of this to exalt Barras at the expense of Bonaparte ? And did it not supply a most merciless commentary on the latter's undertaking ? Did it not give the lie with a truly Tartuffian hypocrisy to what he had written a few lines above when he said : " Bonaparte is having a spell of bad fortune, but that only makes me the more determined to stand by him and to throw in my lot with him."

This passage was inserted in case the letter was seized and shown to Bonaparte ; but in the very next paragraph the writer's knavery reveals itself, for he says; between the lines, to Barras : " I have just protested my devotion to Bonaparte, but be assured that I have my eye on him, and that I will not fail to render you an account of my observations." Reading thus between the lines we see that this is plainly what he wishes to

convey, and the phrase, "As far as I am concerned, I am keeping my eyes open," &c. &c., is very far from being merely philosophical. It makes clear his real meaning, which was : "I have commenced my detective duties; but up to the present I have nothing of importance to communicate."

But the whole is enveloped in a veil of sentimentality intended to delude those good readers who still entertained a belief in Tallien's continued love for the wondrous demi-rep Queen of the Directoire : "Adieu, *ma bonne* Theresia," he cries ; "my paper is wet with tears." One can almost see the Terrorist sprinkling his epistle with sea-water.

And then the postscript : "Let my mother know all about me." What a paragon of a son ! But why did he not write to his beloved mother ?

If Tallien went to Egypt to play the spy upon Bonaparte his designs were frustrated, for coldly as he was received by Kléber and his entourage on his arrival, Bonaparte's reception of him was more frigid still. The Commander-in-Chief was too much of an Italian not to scent a traitor in this revolutionary hyena, not to take good care to keep him absolutely in the dark.

His activities, strictly confined to duties of no importance, were subjected to a close, even a discourteous, surveillance ; the Terrorist lay low and trembled. He found out nothing, made no report that was of the slightest value, and the Emperor-that-was-to-be was in nowise incommoded by his presence—he merely took a dislike to him, a dislike which his not unreasonable suspicion that Josephine had been led astray in his absence by la belle Tallien, by no means tended to diminish.

* * *

Tallien having been packed off to join Bonaparte in Egypt the coast was now clear, and Josephine and Theresia plunged heedlessly into the whirlpool of pleasure.

The letter which the ex-Terrorist wrote his wife from Rosetta, begging her not to give up la Chaumière, seems to suggest that she had already ceased to occupy the residence in question. She had probably found it too far away from the Luxembourg where her "functions" demanded her presence every day, and where it was difficult to get people to forgather during the winter.

Her new house was in the rue de la Victoire, a few steps away from Josephine's.

We know, on the other hand, that this street, formerly called the rue de Chanteraine, did not undergo any change of name until after Bonaparte's return to Paris at the end of 1797. The earliest date, therefore, that the removal from la Chaumière to the rue de la Victoire could have taken place must be assigned to the beginning of the winter of 1797. But at this period (October-November 1797) Bonaparte had not returned to Paris. On November 17, in fact, he was still at Milan, which, however, he was on the eve of quitting in order to proceed to Radstadt with Marmont,* while Theresia—about to become a mother for the third time—was approaching the date of her lying-in. It was not a propitious moment for changing houses; and, besides that, we know how little she liked to advertise her confinements. These various considerations favour the supposition that she would have remained in the Allée des Veuves until after the interesting event was over.

According to the official documents published by Charles Nauroy, the birth of Theresia's third child took place on the 30th Frimaire, year VI (December 20, 1797).†

* *Mémoires du Duc de Raguse* (Book II, p. 307).

† In Nauroy's work the Republican date is translated as June 18, 1798; and Tarquan, in "*La Citoyenne Tallien*," corrects this reading, and gives it as December 20, 1798! That the year is wrongly given in both works appears clear, for, while the birth in question fits in very well with Madame Tallien's doings in 1797, it would be very difficult to harmonise it with her programme in 1798.

Tallien was obliged to accept the legal paternity of the second child (Theresia's third), though of all the possible parents he was least, and Barras most likely, to have been the real one. However, the child did not live to be a monument of its mother's misconduct. It died at birth.

A few weeks after this almost negligible little "mishap" Theresia resumed the life of brilliant and increasing gaiety that she found essential to her happiness, and in January or February 1798, transferred her residence to the rue de la Victoire, near to Josephine. Such—at any rate, in the absence of any record of the exact dates—is the most likely hypothesis concerning her movements.

In this new abode Barras' favourite went in greatly for entertaining. Ouvrard informs us that all the influential people in the Government, generals, artists, financiers, forgathered in her salon.*

* Questions which had been been formally debated in the Hall of Convention would be ardently discussed over again in eager conversations. The Thermidorians were labouring to crush the final efforts of the Montagnards, and all their endeavours were centred upon the task of keeping the power which they had risked so much to win. Considering themselves absolved from the necessity of observing the reticences imposed upon them when addressing a public assembly, the disputants made no attempt to conceal the passions, ambitions, and interests by which they were animated. Here was to be seen General Hoche, his mobile countenance revealing all the enthusiastic ardour, the indomitable courage, of the soul within. Madame de Beauharnais lent to these gatherings the charm of her gentle disposition and her gracious wit. Here it was that chance, which held the loftiest of destinies in store for her, first brought her into contact with Bonaparte, who, though just an ordinary artillery officer, would sometimes—throwing aside his customary air of cold reserve—afford a glimpse into the far-reaching depths of his designs and the high enthusiasm which possessed his soul. It was some time prior to the 13th Vendémiaire that Bonaparte made his first appearance at Madame Tallien's. Of all those whom she received, he was, perhaps, the least in the public eye, and the least of fortune's favourites. I little thought then that a day would come when the fate of the world would be in his hands. Politics, though forming the staple of the conversation, did not occupy us exclusively. It often happened that, in the midst of the most animated conversations, people would go aside and form little groups, where they forgot in light and careless converse the grave matters that oppressed their thoughts. Bonaparte rarely joined them, but when he did he displayed an abandon and a light-heartedness fulfilled of wit and sparkle.

Wherever we search, among the memoirs and correspondence of the time, we find people saying that the "Directeur-Roy" diverted the public funds to provide for his "Queen"; while some—and these, perhaps, the better informed—gave his mistress a share in the various deals in which he took part. The latter represent la belle Tallien as gathering round her a multitude of guests from among whom she selected the "likely" ones, such as Ouvrard. These she proceeded to introduce at the Luxembourg or at Gros Bois, where Barras made use of them, reserving for the tempting bait of these pearly oysters—sharks were perhaps the better word—the commission which her services had earned. From the Luxembourg she would convey her various "fancies" to her house in the rue de la Victoire, particularly such as, in the ardour of their admiration, were ready to place the contents of their purses in her beautiful hands.

For all these transactions—equally pleasant and necessary—the house in the rue de la Victoire was an indispensable annexe to the Luxembourg Palace, and continued to be so till our Provençal Vicomte, or king of the revolutionary mob, disquieted at length by the animadversions evoked by his fair one's shady tricks, conceived the idea of shifting her off on to Ouvrard.

The exact date when this disgraceful bargain was concluded is, as we have already explained, unknown to us. La Revellière-Lépeaux, who records the cynical hilarity with which his brazen-faced colleague recounted the circumstances of the deal, mentions Gros Bois as the scene of the transaction.

A big hunting party, to which Ouvrard was invited, gave the necessary publicity to the transfer; and the same evening, in order that all Paris should know what had taken place, Barras' quondam favourite had to display her presence in the financier's box, to drive up to the

theatre in his carriage, and to show herself on terms of significant familiarity with her new titular protector. Now, Gros Bois—which the Director had obtained for the ridiculously small sum of three hundred thousand livres (did he, one wonders, pay in assignats ?)—the Opera, and the hunting party are three factors which prove that the deal in which Barras was the vendor, Ouvrard the transferee, and Theresia the property transferred, must have taken place in September or October.

Then, again, a statement of legal expenses written in Theresia's own hand and signed "Theresia Cabarrus Tallien," bears witness to the fact that, on the 21st Fructidor, year VII (August 8, 1799), she was living in the rue de Babylone. But this date implies that she had already been in occupation of the house for a considerable period, since the due discharge of the legal formalities connected with the conveyance of the property, and the drawing up of the list of fees which its taking-over involved, would have occupied no short time. We may take it, therefore, that la belle Tallien had already been in possession of the house in the rue de Babylone for some months when she drew up the above-mentioned list, and this necessarily brings the date of Theresia's transfer to some time during the autumn of 1798.

Those who assert that it was after her second divorce that she quitted la Chaumière to take up her abode at No. 685 rue de Babylone, and that she owed this house to the generosity of Barras, are grievously in error. As a matter of fact, Theresia's second divorce took place in April 1802. At this date Theresia, who was then residing at the house in the rue de Babylone, was already the mother of two children. One, a daughter, was born on February 1, 1800; and the other, a boy, on April 19, 1801; and she was already expecting a third. This latter—which was her sixth child, counting the one that

was stillborn—proved to be a girl, and saw the light on May 25, 1802.*

As regards the tenure of the house in the rue de Babylone, the autograph statement forms an irrefutable piece of evidence, and there is no doubt that the house in question was in the possession of la belle Tallien at the end of 1798, or the beginning of 1799 at the latest. Furthermore, the Comte de Reiset, in his monograph, *Les Modes et les Usages du Temps de Marie Antoinette* (vol. ii, p. 210), informs us that Madame Tallien was living at No. 21 rue de la Chaussée d'Antin, opposite the house in which Mirabaud died. Frederick Lock, in his *Guide Alphabétique des rues et monuments de Paris* (page 24), records that in 1800 Theresia was residing at No. 1 rue Laffitte, the house which Cerruti used to live in, and which was afterwards pulled down and replaced by the "Maison Dorée." †

In *Le Curieux* Ch. Nauroy states also that she occupied about this time—but only for the briefest period—a house in the rue de Varennes, which was demolished when the rue Mademoiselle (now the rue de Vanneau) was cut, and, what is of still greater interest, he adds: "Barras gave her a large piece of ground, a quadrangular plot, which was formed by the rue de Babylone, the rue Vanneau, the rue de Varennes, and the rue Barbet de Jouy, and through which the rue de Chanalailles now runs." Finally, G. Lenotre, whose information comes at first hand from the Marquis de Chanalailles, and who has visited the house, which is still in existence, confirms the accuracy of this account of the site, though he does not say whether it was to Barras or to Ouvrard that Madame Tallien was indebted for the house.

* G. Lenotre, in his *Vieilles Maisons, vieux papiers*, vol. i, pp. 234, 235; and Charles Nauroy, in *Le Curieux*, have recorded these as the exact dates.

† The "Maison Dorée" was at the corner of the Boulevard des Italiens and the rue Laffitte

If we may doubt the veracity of the *Princesse de Chimay* when she is recounting incidents to her own advantage, there is no reason to question the accuracy of her assertions in matters where her interests are not involved, and where she would have been in a better position to judge than other people.

Such were the circumstances in which the gift was bestowed. Whether *Theresia* owed the house to the generosity of *Barras* or of *Ouvrard*, it was, at all events, a present from a lover to his mistress, a return for favours granted. There is therefore no reason to disbelieve her when she affirms that she was indebted to *Ouvrard* for this princely gift. Now, it is *Theresia* herself who tells or dictates the story ; but, needless to say, she produces quite respectable motives to account for *Ouvrard's* generosity. By alleging at the outset that it was to her influence and counsel that *Ouvrard* was indebted for his fortune, she contrived to reduce the present to the dimensions of a very modest token of gratitude.*

It appears that in the *rue de la Victoire* she felt the want of the umbrageous retreats that she had enjoyed so much at *la Chaumière*. *Ouvrard*, hearing this complaint of hers, and smiling at the flowers with which she adorned her window sills—as an all too inadequate means of recalling the spacious gardens of the *Allée des Veuves*—invited her to go with him to look at a garden he knew of in the *rue de Babylone*. He led her all through the “*petite maison*” of the *ci-devant Marquis de Barbançon*, listened to her praises of its “*park*,” and,

* *Ouvrard* was the possessor of many millions before he knew *Madame Tallien*. He was already doing business on a considerable scale, and *Theresia* is guilty of an egregious falsehood when she says that he owed his fortune to her. The contracts he obtained through the agency, and with the complicity, of *Barras* added a few more millions to those of which he was already possessed ; but, shortly afterwards, *Bonaparte* took it upon himself to lighten his coffers by compelling him to advance more than sixty millions without security, and this he was never repaid

when she had showered all manner of ecstatic epithets on the place in general, he presented her with "a little golden key"—the sesame of the Paradise in question—telling her that it was all her own.

"Adieu, Madame," said he; "you are in your own home. Your servants are all here. You have but to speak: your commands will be obeyed. It is thus that I pay my debts."

Madame Tallien rubbed her eyes incredulously. She wondered whether she had been reading a fairy tale.

We need not inquire whether we have been listening to a passage from a penny novelette: we evidently have been.

Lenotre gives us the following delightful description of the beautiful residence with which Madame Tallien was thus presented by Ouvrard.

"The main entrance of Madame Tallien's new abode was almost opposite the Caserne de Babylone, and when the doors stood ajar, the eye beheld in long vista the shady retreats of a lovely park. There were immense lawns studded with groups of trees, and bounded by stately groves, beyond which one could just discern the white façade, the slate-covered domes and triangular pediments of a little, single-storied palace standing apart, surrounded by verdant lawns. The demesne seemed illimitable: other parks—those belonging to the residences of the de Birons, the de Rohans, and the de Matignons—surrounded it with their broad meadows and shady groves, so that it appeared to extend as far as the rue de Varenne."

"This beautiful abode was not without its history. It had been built in the 18th century by a certain Marquis de Barbançon and sold, during the Revolution, as national property. Subsequently offered as a prize in a lottery it was won by some old maid, who, without so much as troubling to go and look at it, put it up for sale.

It was thus that it became the property of Theresia Cabarrus." *

"Contrary to the statement of one of Madame Tallien's historians, the house has not been pulled down; the erstwhile 'petite maison' of the Marquis de Barbançon is still intact. The spacious park, indeed, is no more; but; hemmed in by modern streets, surrounded by blocks of flats whose hundred eyes stare impudently down into the little patch of garden—sole relic of the groves of other days—the house itself remains half hidden by a clump of chestnut trees whose shade lingers lovingly on its white façade, its grooved columns, and its porticos with their startled Minervas. It is a sort of smiling Trianon that looks a little wistful, a little petulant even, as though it resented being deprived of those stately lawns in whose midst it had once reared itself so proudly. Upon one of the porticoes are inscribed the words 'Hôtel de Chanalaillies,' the name of the family who have owned the place since 1840, and who have given their name to the adjoining street. This charming retreat still remains just as it was at the beginning of the century, and so handsome are its floors that Visconti had it in mind to use them to decorate the new Louvre."

At the end of 1798 and during the major part of 1799, Theresia—tempting syren—was swimming in an ocean of delight. Her maintenance was on a royal scale: a mansion in town, a rustic residence at the far end of the Cours-la-Reine; while, if the general reports are to be believed, she had other dwellings besides these two official residences: a little place on the right bank of the river in the rue Laffitte or the rue de la Chaussée d'Antin, and a strictly private retreat in the rue de Varennes. However, nothing certain is known about either of these last-named abodes. Horses and carriages, a great retinue of

* Archives of the "Administration des Domaines," and information furnished by the Marquis de Chanalaillies, the present owner

servants, an exquisite table, gowns and jewellery in profusion—she lacked nothing.

However, the picture had its dark side : every one knew she was Ouvrard's mistress. " Well," it may be said; " but had she not been Barras' mistress before that ? " Ouvrard was not a Vicomte of Provence, but he was infinitely more delicate, more refined, more of a gentleman than Barras. He may not have been so fine a man physically, but his discretion and his immense fortune—of which he made unstinting use—amply made up for these defects.

But no ! Ouvrard was a mere business man, a money grubber ; Barras was a sort of king. So, at least, thought Madame Tallien, who as little dreamed of the latter's imminent fall as her excellent friend Josephine foresaw the coming of the Consulate and the Empire.

Both appeared blind to the disgust and weariness felt by people generally with regard to the Republican régime and to the practical unanimity of the censure passed on the Government by the French people—all of them circumstances which tended to put the country into Bonaparte's hands.

Of what was taking place in the political world, whether at home or abroad, Theresia and Josephine knew next to nothing ; and the Government oscillated between Royalism and Terrorism, Terrorism and Royalism, without their being in the least aware of it.

They knew, of course, that Sieyès—the ex-abbé—Roger Ducos, Gohier, and General Moulins had ousted Treilhard, Rewbell, La Révellière-Lépeaux, and Merlin de Douai from the Directoire on the 30th Prairial, year VI (June 18, 1798) ; but what mattered that since Barras still retained his seat. Hadn't he boasted that, if he had been in Louis the Sixteenth's place, he would have still been King ? " Tell them to come on ! " he cries to his rivals. He fears them not. He has got his place, and he means

to keep it. As to the Conscription Act of September 5; 1798, they could not very well help being aware of that, since, by sending all the younger men away to join the armies, it had denuded the salons. There were none left now to "foot it featly" in the dance, no more downy-skinned, beardless youths to flirt with—the selfishness and obstinacy of middle-aged men are infinitely monotonous and wearisome, and with regard to their other deficiencies we had perhaps better refrain from inquiry.

But it would be a great error to conclude that they were unoccupied: quite the reverse! They were nearly driven to death—with pleasure. It was most wearing. Besides—would you believe it?—they had work to do. Yes; *la belle Tallien* had to see to the organisation of her new establishment in the *rue de Babylone*. But what about *Josephine*? Oh! she had her debts. Yes; she owed about one million two hundred thousand francs, roughly. A nice little sum! She still owed for two-thirds of the national property she had acquired at a price of one million one hundred and ninety-five thousand francs in the Department of *la Dyle*. She had taken over *Malmaison*—a positive fairyland—for a mere song: two hundred and twenty-five thousand francs for the place, thirty-seven thousand five hundred and sixteen francs for furniture and fittings; besides nine thousand one hundred and eleven francs for registration expenses; the whole amounting to about two hundred and seventy-two thousand francs. On the other hand, her brother-in-law *Joseph* allowed her forty-thousand francs a year; but, heavens! how money will go!

* * *

Meantime, *Nelson* burnt the French fleet to the very last vessel. *Bonaparte* lay encamped before *Rosetta*; surrounded by generals and officers who were grumbling because they had no bread to eat. The Turkish Govern-

ment incited the Moslems to rise against the conquerors of Egypt, and the Commander-in-Chief was forced to throw a part of his forces into Syria, where they suffered grievous loss, from the enemy at Saint Jean d'Acre and from the plague at Jaffa. And then, as if this were not enough, informers, with axes of their own to grind, brought word to Bonaparte that Josephine in Paris had been consoling herself for his absence. Nevertheless he must needs endure all, he must needs repress or dissemble his feelings, and he continued to do so till certain information that he received from his brothers Joseph and Lucien, or that filtered through to him from the English, decided him to bid a sudden and almost secret farewell to the land of the Pharaohs and to hurry away to France to take the long premeditated step of supplanting the Republican Government—now hopelessly effete*—by a Consular dictatorship, with himself as Dictator.

He returned, therefore, with all speed, and on October 9, 1799, he set foot on shore at Fréjus.

Though they detested Josephine most cordially, all the members of Bonaparte's family agreed that an open rupture at this critical moment, when his fortunes were trembling in the balance, might ruin everything, and begged him to postpone taking the revenge to which he

* Chancellor Pasquier gives us to understand that at this juncture Barras was more than politically bankrupt, and that he had to sell his abdication to Bonaparte, who had come back rich enough to pay the price. Barras' irresolution—or rather, Bonaparte's skill in provoking and fostering this irresolution—was the means by which he (Bonaparte) rid himself for ever of a man who had aspired to the highest position in the State, but who had sunk to such depths of degradation that it was regarded as compromising to be associated with him. Barras managed to keep the money he had laid hands on, and possibly more still was given him. He had the rare luck to be able to finish out his life in a condition of peaceful obscurity after occupying the highest position in the State, and he apparently found in the enjoyments offered by this inglorious situation sufficient consolation for the power which he had lost. Thus it was that he went through the Consulate and the Empire, which gave him back to the Royalist Government in exactly the same condition as it had received him. (*Mémoires du Chancelier Pasquier*, p. 142.)

was so justly entitled. But their prayers came too late; and fell upon deaf ears. Bonaparte, stung into fury by the reports and proofs that had been laid before him, had finally made up his mind. Nothing would prevent him putting her away.

Learning how the land lay, the faithless Josephine flew panic-stricken to meet him to plead her innocence or to throw herself on his mercy. Unhappily she took the wrong road and missed him. Meanwhile Bonaparte reached Paris and proceeded to take the necessary steps to keep her at arm's length, determining that the separation should become operative in fact, before the seal was put upon it by the law.

When Josephine, worn out by the fatigues and anxieties of her fruitless journey, returned more distracted than ever to the Hôtel Chantierine, it was before a door inexorably closed against her that she found herself compelled to pour forth her prayers, her lamentations, and her tears. All day and all night, without tasting food, she remained before his door, conjuring him for her children's sake to have compassion on her.

F. Masson has imparted a touch of rare beauty to his description of this passionate scene, telling us how the heartfelt anguish of the reckless wife triumphed at last over the just resentment of the victorious soldier she had so foolishly betrayed.

He says nothing of the grief, the disgust, the sufferings that rent the heart of Bonaparte; nothing of the wrath which gave place to prudence, of prudence that in turn was swept away by wrath; nothing of the sorrow and pity that knocked at his heart in the course of this interminable struggle when, though they never beheld each other face to face, each was as it were torn asunder by emotion. But we see it all, even more clearly than if he had depicted the scene in detail, when he shows us Bonaparte throwing open his door at last, and coming forward with drawn

face and arms outstretched in an attitude of forgiveness and appeal.

It is one of the finest pages that were ever penned by Bonaparte's bard-historian. Its acceptance forces itself upon us with the authority of absolute truth, because it is so profoundly human. We see that, in the heart of the man whose ambition it was to conquer and subdue the world, whose conduct on so many counts only merits our unqualified condemnation, selfishness had not sunk to baseness ; and that covers a multitude of sins.

CHAPTER VI

Fall of la belle Tallien—Her relations with Josephine broken off—Ouvrard's three children—Tallien leaves Egypt and goes to London and thence to Paris—Tallien sues for divorce and practises the gentle art of blackmail—The Chevalier Fontenay returns to France—Marescalchi's ball—Ouvrard ruined—Theresia's receptions at her house in the rue de Babylone before her third marriage—Tallien consoled with the Consulate of Alicante—Suppression of documents relating to Theresia's story—Interviews between Bonaparte and Theresia in the days of the Consulate—The masked ball at the Tuileries during the Empire—Theresia weds the Comte de Caraman—The marriage certificate of Madame de Cabarrus-Caraman—Death of the Prince de Chimay—Travels in Italy—Theresia is officially received by the King of Etruria at the Pitti in Florence, and by Joseph Bonaparte, King of Sicily, at Naples—Josephine and Theresia see each other by night at Malmaison—Napoleon formally forbids these interviews—Tallien returns to Paris—His poverty—He receives assistance—His residence in the Allée des Veuves—The first child of the Cabarrus-Chimay marriage—Josephine is divorced—Theresia and Cambacérès—The adventure at the Louvre Exhibition.

1800-1814

BONAPARTE had granted her his pardon, and, says Frédéric Masson, it was a pardon free from all reservations. The past was to be wiped out : no further allusion was ever to be made to it ; but—there were to be no more slips, no more indiscretions !

Bonaparte not unreasonably ascribed the greater part of Josephine's misdeeds to the pernicious influence of the people she had had about her, and, indeed, the Directoire, Barras and his court, Tallien and la belle Theresia, were largely responsible for the frailties, the wild extravagance, the compromising words and deeds of the featherbrained Creole.

The First Consul had always despised Tallien, and now he began to regard him with a dislike that was very near akin to hatred, for he had looked into the soul of the creature and had seen cowardice written there—cowardice, mother of treachery and cruelty.

As long ago as Year II he had fully recognised that Tallien's part in the events of the 9th Thermidor had been that of a tool and not a ringleader, that his apparent boldness was in reality the result of excessive terror, and that his sole object in overthrowing the bloodthirsty tyrant was to prevent that tyrant overthrowing him.

In assisting to bring about Robespierre's fall, Tallien had delayed the break-up of the Republican régime merely in order that he might continue to profit by its continued existence. This Bonaparte saw full well and regarded it as a crime greater than any the fallen dictator had committed.

He had become aware, particularly since his conquests in Italy, that Tallien had been making systematic endeavours to bring about a restoration of the Monarchy, which, if they had succeeded, would have spelled the irremediable overthrow of his own designs, for, since the 13th Vendémiaire, he had become very clearly impressed with the possibility of replacing the revolutionary bandits who controlled the Republic by a military dictatorship—with a Cæsar at the head of it.

His hostility to Tallien had then, as we see, potent, invincible reasons. This explains why, despite the immense indulgence he displayed towards political thieves and assassins in general, he showed no favour to Tallien. Talleyrand and Fouché—whom he despised, but whose redeeming points he recognised—were destined to be overwhelmed with wealth and distinctions, whilst it was only with reluctance and in consequence of the urgent solicitations of these latter that he at length consented to bestow on the regicide Tallien the second-rate Consulship

of Alicante. As for Madame Tallien, though she had led Josephine to play him false in the silliest and most ignoble fashion, he did not hate her. He summed up her character with remarkable accuracy, and decided that she was too complete a nonentity to be worthy of his wrath.

Later on, when he recalled the favours she had once bestowed on him, how she had suffered him to enjoy her incomparable charms, he consented to see her again, and spoke to her in language from which all anger, all resentment were absent. But he never made the mistake of including her among his entourage or of giving her an opportunity of making capital out of his indulgence by bestowing it upon her publicly.

For poor Josephine there was absolute, entire remission of all her sins, but it involved for her a rupture no less entire, no less absolute with the whole of the past, and she was formally forbidden ever to see her miserable and scandalous companions again.

As for the debts which the rash creature had incurred they were not worth talking about. Bonaparte had brought home spoil enough from the wars to enable him to look upon them as mere trifles.

The ancient land of Egypt had furnished him with unimaginable resources, since he handed out without a murmur the 1,195,000 francs for the national property which Josephine had undertaken to buy, the 1,200,000 francs of debts incurred by Josephine—to say nothing of other expenditure of which we have no definite knowledge, and which, in these days when the Consulate was on its trial, prudence counselled him to conceal.

It was then that the deified Theresia fell from her pedestal with a sudden and most inglorious crash.

Her guttersnipe king had disappeared, carrying off with him in his ignoble scuttle the wherewithal to ensure himself a comfortable existence.

Josephine dropped her like a hot coal. Bonaparte,

politely but inflexibly, insisted on keeping her at a distance. Thus repulsed, she fell heavily back on Ouvrard the army contractor—hardly the sort of lover to bring about a more cordial understanding for her with one to whom all army contractors were anathema.

And so beauty, display, elegance, and indecency had scored the last of their triumphs ; and, like her, all the other wantons of the Directoire Court had been placed on the index.

Turquan appears to imagine that Madame Bonaparte used to see her secretly, either at Malmaison or in the suite of rooms she had taken in 1800 at the corner of the rue Laffitte and the boulevards. This belief of his originated in Sophie Gay's stories and in a letter which Napoleon wrote to Josephine from Berlin in 1806.

" Mon amie," he says ; " I have received your letter. I forbid you to see Madame Tallien on any pretence whatever. I will have no excuses. If you value my esteem and wish to please me, never transgress this injunction. If she tries to gain access to you, if she comes to you under cover of night, tell your porters to keep her out. A poor wretch has married her with her eight bastards. Her I despise more than ever I did. She who was a gentle girl is branded, as a woman, with horror and infamy. I shall be at Malmaison soon. I tell you this because I don't want to find any lovers there by night : I should be sorry to have to disturb them." *

The necessity for this renewed inhibition is not far to seek. Six years had passed by, and so many events had taken place during that period that the thoughtless Empress might well have imagined that Napoleon's mistrust and dislike had grown weaker and perhaps disappeared altogether.

At Malmaison, therefore, she decided to run the risk of receiving her former friend Theresia, but it must be

* " La Citoyenne Tallien," pp. 285-286.

observed that the latter was no longer la belle Tallien, her divorce having taken place in 1802 ; nor was she at this date the deputy Madame Ouvrard. On the 15th Thermidor, year XIII, she had become the lawful wife of the Comte de Caraman, and the regular social position thus conferred on her, the esteem in which her husband was held, and the quiet moderation of her home-life, presenting as it did a complete contrast with her previous behaviour, at once explain and excuse the Empress's disregard of Bonaparte's former prohibitions.

But it would be quite opposed to common sense to imagine that, immediately after the exposure of her compromising behaviour at the court of King Barras—an exposure which all but resulted in what would have been a perfectly well deserved expulsion from the Hôtel de Chantereine—Josephine would have been so mad as to hold secret meetings with Ouvrard's concubine.

Sophie Gay states that Madame Bonaparte was currently believed to have incited Madame Tallien to break off relations with Ouvrard, because she thought that her husband's dislike of army contractors was the sole obstacle to a renewal of their friendship.

No less plausible suggestion could possibly be advanced. There is no documentary evidence to support it, and it is wholly at variance with the probabilities of the situation. Josephine was only too well aware of the unimportance of the liaison between Madame Tallien and Ouvrard in comparison with her husband's other grievances against the fair lady to advance that liaison as the sole cause of Bonaparte's veto.

What friend would she have dared to ask to act for her in such a matter prior to 1802 (the year of Tallien's divorce), when the First Consul's injunction was still of such recent date ?

How could she have entertained the idea of advising Theresia to break with Ouvrard, who was then supplying

all her extravagances on a princely scale, and who was generally reputed to be the father of the children which she brought into the world almost every year ?

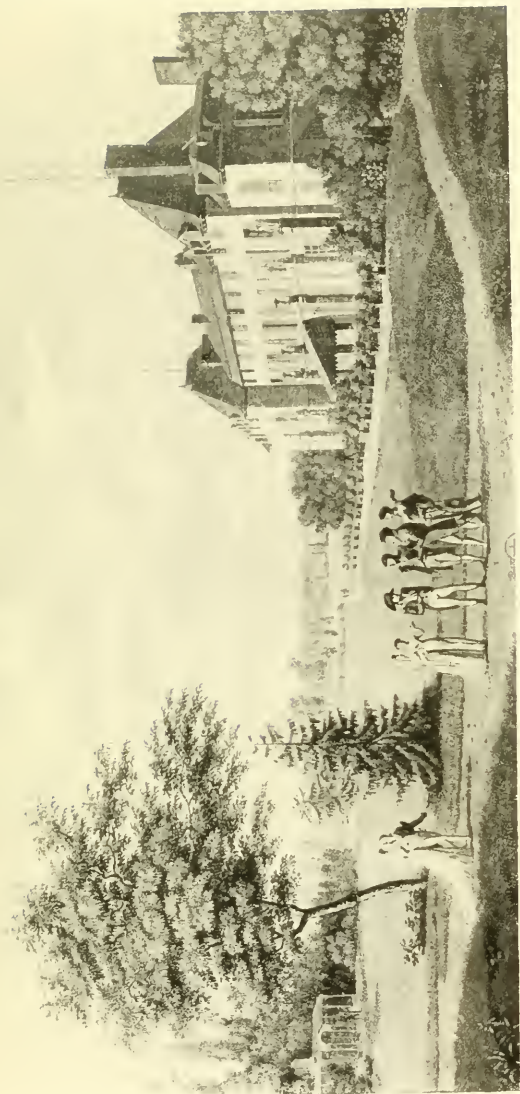
Far from dreaming of bringing about a reconciliation between Madame Tallien and Bonaparte, she could only have regarded such a return to favour with apprehension, for she knew that her husband had been in the habit of consoling himself freely for her unfaithfulness ever since the Egyptian campaign, when he had had a highly piquant intrigue with a young and fascinating woman called Fourès.

It was therefore no object of Josephine's to supply the First Consul with opportunities of comparing her already waning charms with the still blooming loveliness of a woman like Madame Tallien. Bonaparte, alas, had only too many chances of playing her false with more potent charmers than herself. To introduce into the privacy of her domestic circle so facile a seductress as Theresia would have been the height of folly.

But in 1806 it was quite a different matter. Theresia was then the Comtesse de Caraman ; she had settled down and boasted a lawful husband, a man of excellent family, who had just inherited a principedom. Her beauty, moreover, was very very visibly on the decline. Josephine therefore might very well imagine that, if she could not reconcile Theresia with Napoleon, the latter would certainly have no objection to their seeing each other privately at Malmaison.

But Napoleon was too well acquainted with her failings, her rashness, and her heedlessness, not to have a strict watch kept upon her actions. It is soon reported to him at Berlin that she had been receiving Theresia, and we have seen from the letter above quoted in what violent terms he enjoined her never to disobey his orders again.

If, in 1800, la belle Tallien had a suite of rooms at the corner of the rue Laffitte and the boulevard, in addition



THE CHATEAU AT MALMAISON FROM THE GARDEN
From a drawing by Bourgeois engraved by Perdoux

to her "official" residence, which was still the house in the rue de Babylone, it was not to receive the future Empress there, but other visitors concerning whom, however, information is entirely lacking.

Ch. Nauroy, in "*Le Curieux*," has published a letter which entirely confirms the logical inferences we have set forth above. It runs as follows :

" To Madame Bonaparte,
" Chateau des Tuileries,
" 25 Vendémiaire, Year IX.
(October 17, 1800.)

" Citizen Brononville is desirous of being accorded an interview with you, and he fancies that a letter from me to you, who were once my friend, would serve him in good stead, and interest you in his favour.

" But time, events, and your own heart have undeceived me, and I do not indulge so flattering an illusion. At the same time I could not refuse to bestow on a man who has been for twenty-two years the loyal servant of the Government, and who lost all his worldly possessions in the crises of the Revolution, a proof of my goodwill. To him it affords some hope of better days in store, and to me an opportunity of reminding you that my friendship for you is proof against everything, and that it will end only with my life.

" THERESIA CABARRUS-TALLIEN."

Thus, when Turquan, on the authority of Sophie Gay, would have us believe that Josephine was having secret meetings with Theresia in the rue Laffitte, and that through a friendly go-between she was advising her to break with Ouvrard, Madame Tallien was inditing a letter to the First Consul's wife and referring to her as, "you who were once my friend"—a meek way of saying, "You who are my friend no more." It was a reproach both respectful and timid ; but it was very much to the point.

A few lines farther on she again harped bitterly on the friendship which Josephine had repudiated. "True," she says, "events and your own heart have undeceived me, and I do not indulge so flattering an illusion."

And then there comes this last, this crowning reproach. For him it is a "hope of better days in store, and for me an opportunity of telling you once more that my affection is proof against everything, and that it will end only with my life."

Is it not clear that a friend who feels that she must not employ the familiar "tu" and "toi," who apologises so mournfully for writing, could not have once seen Madame Bonaparte since the First Consul's return from Egypt?

One need not be a very subtle logician to see through the little domestic plot that such a letter suggests by the mere fact that it is couched in a style to which Theresia never could lay claim.

Since she herself did not compose this letter, which contains an elegant and highly skilful expression of her feelings, whither shall we look for the cultured secretary, the adroit diplomat, who put himself to the trouble of conveying her recommendation in such faultless style?

It might have been Citizen Brononville in whose favour the letter was written. But is it not more probable that it was Ouvrard?

Who was better acquainted than he with the longings, the mortification, the vain hopes that gnawed at the heart of la belle Tallien? Who knew more intimately than he the innermost details of the sundered friendship? And who would derive more advantage than he from a renewal of that friendship?

Theresia's persistence in attempting to get into the good graces of the Emperor and Josephine need occasion us no surprise if we remember that, until 1805, she possessed in Ouvrard a protector who had an important axe to grind in bringing about such a reconciliation.

As to whether she played Ouvrard false with those admirers—still considerable in number—whom she invited to her receptions, no certain evidence is forthcoming.*

That her beauty was still powerfully seductive is proved by the fact that she so enslaved the Comte de Caraman as to lead him to make her his wife, in spite of the violent opposition of his family. But as she had no love-affair—as she was continually in an interesting condition from 1801 to 1803—we may presume that she attached herself pretty closely to the Government contractor (regretting no doubt that she could not prevail on him to marry her) and that she endeavoured by presenting him with children to hold him to her by means of the affection a father naturally entertains for his offspring.

The series of children of whom Ouvrard was the reputed father began with the Demoiselle Clemence Isaure Thérésia, who was born on the 12th Pluviose, year VIII (February 5, 1800). She married Colonel Hyacinthe Devaux. There were no children of the marriage, and on her husband's death she became a nun in a very easy-going community known as the Dames de Saint-Louis at Juilly. Her death occurred in 1884.

The following year, the 29th Germinal, year IX (April 19, 1801), was born the second child attributable to Ouvrard (this was Theresia's fifth infant, counting the one that was stillborn). This time it was a boy, Jules

* Petrus Durel, in his "Madame Tallien," tells the story of a very vulgar escapade with which Theresia was credited when she belonged to Ouvrard. It appears that at Saint Germain, during a fête, she was dining in the open air when she was attracted by a strolling musician, who had been singing some disgusting verses by Saint Just, and that she eluded Ouvrard for a while in order to give herself to this mendicant troubadour.

We leave the whole responsibility for the story to the author of "Madame Tallien," for there is no evidence to support it, though we would point out that it is scarcely in harmony with the general conduct of Theresia, whose very vanity imparted a certain elegance to her lapses from morality.

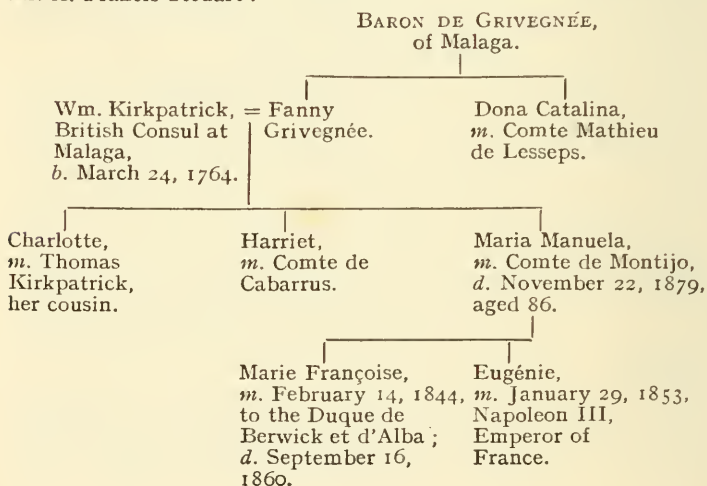
Adolphe Edouard, who, as Doctor Cabarrus, won for himself a considerable reputation. Arsène Houssaye numbered him among his acquaintance, and was indebted to him for more than one of the reminiscences which he included in his *Apologia* of Notre Dame de Thermidor. It was through his branch of the family that the descendants of la belle Tallien became allied with the de Lesseps.*

The year after there came another child (Ouvrard's third, Theresia's sixth), born on the 5th Prairial, year X (May 25, 1802). This was Clarisse Thérésia who, in 1826, married Achille Ferdinand Brunetière, a black musketeer in the King's bodyguard.

The following year there was yet another birth, but this was shrouded in such mystery that it is impossible to say whether this, Theresia's seventh child, was Ouvrard's fourth.

In the year 1835 a Court of Law ruled that the three preceding children had the right to call themselves

* The following genealogical table has been kindly furnished by Mr. A. Francis Steuart :



“ Tallien,” a decision which was—legal, but annoying, since they were all conceived when Tallien was in Egypt or in London. But Theresia's seventh child (was it Ouvrard's fourth?) was never accorded permission to call herself by the name of Tallien, in consequence of the divorce which had been pronounced the year before.

The birth certificate of this seventh production of Theresia has never been brought to light; but her marriage certificate which was discovered by Charles Nauroy and published in “ Le Curieux ” gives the date of her birth together with some other matters of interest :

“ On Thursday, November 21, 1822, took place the marriage of M. Amédée Ferdinand Moissan de Vaux, aged 31 years, born at Bayeux on the 8th October, 1791, residing at 50 bis rue Saint-Lazare, Paris, only son of Michel Victor Frédéric Moissan, Baron of Vaux, and of Dame Angélique Antoinette Hélène Duperrier, residing at 35 Faubourg Saint-Honoré, Paris, with Auguste Stéphane Coralie Thérésia Cabarrus dite Lenoir, aged 19 years, born in Paris on the 2nd September, 1803, residing at 50 bis rue Saint-Lazare, Paris, a minor, daughter of Dame Marie Jeanne Ignace Thérésia Cabarrus, of independent means, residing at Brussels in the Kingdom of the Netherlands, and represented by Monsieur Malafait, her solicitor.”

How came it that this young woman Cabarrus, whom Theresia recognised since she gave her consent to her marriage, was commonly called “ Lenoir ” ?

In this connexion Petrus Durel quotes an extract from the *Moniteur Universel* of the year 1822 (p. 649), from which it would appear that this daughter of Theresia petitioned His Majesty, through the Keeper of the Seals, for permission to add to her own name that of “ Lenoir,” which was the name of her guardian.

Like her future husband, she was living at 50 bis rue Saint-Lazare : did she occupy the same apartments? That we cannot say for certain, though it is likely as the

bridegroom was obliged to address respectful demands to his parents in order to compel them by legal means to assent to the marriage. The father, who was connected with the Dumouriez family, may have held la belle Tallien in detestation. At all events, Coralie's was a love match, and her mother appeared also to regard it with coldness, for, although she yielded her consent, she was not present at the wedding. She was represented at the ceremony by Malafait the solicitor, and calls herself simply "Dame Cabarrus, propriétaire à Bruxelles," whereas in reality she was Comtesse de Caraman, Princesse de Chimay, and owner of the residence belonging to the Principality in Belgium.

To conceal the titles of which she was so proud, was a remarkable thing for Theresia.

Clarisse Gabrielle, her next youngest child, who was born in 1802, was, when she married Brunetière the black musketeer in 1826, referred to as the daughter of "Marie Jeanne Ignace Thérésia Comtesse de Cabarrus, wife of Monseigneur François Joseph Philippe de Riguët, Comte de Caraman, Prince de Chimay, Chamberlain to His Majesty the King of the Netherlands, residing in their Principality of Chimay." Here we have the full array of titles without a single omission; even her father's Spanish title is included, for she calls herself "Comtesse de Cabarrus," though her right to do so is more than questionable.

Such being the productivity of la belle Tallien from 1800 to 1803, it is evident that she had little time for gallantry.

True, as soon as they were born, the children were sent out of the house in the rue de Babylone, but they were kept only a few yards away in the Boulevard des Invalides, where they could easily be fetched for Ouvrard to dandle on his knee, supposing that he took any delight in the process.

We must forbear to tax Theresia with engaging in amorous adventures during the years 1800 to 1805 without sufficient evidence to prove our assertions. The prodigality, however, with which she bestowed her favours during the preceding years—from 1788 to 1800, that is to say—is only too strong an argument against any sudden access of continence at a period when she must have been conscious of the decline of her demoralising beauty.

Meanwhile, Tallien had found his way back to Paris. He had grown disgusted with Egypt, where he had vainly attempted to acquire a little prestige by publishing a review entitled *La Decade Egyptienne*, and where Kléber's contemptuous indifference towards him—an attitude shared by Kléber's successor Masson—had made his life one of bitter hopelessness.

On the voyage home his ship was captured by the English, a circumstance to which he owed his acquaintance with London, where he was most warmly received.

Whatever the Thermidorian legend may have brought him in the shape of toasts and banquets, whatever credit we may attach to the story of his having received from the Duchess of Devonshire her portrait set in diamonds—a very doubtful tale—or of his keeping the portrait and returning the diamonds—which is more doubtful still—he apparently had not enough money to pay his hotel bill when he left.

It were well, however, not to place too much reliance on these tales which, since the Princesse de Chimay or Tallien himself can be their only source, are therefore more than dubious.

On the other hand, it is quite likely that, when he set foot on the Continent again—it would have been in April or May, 1801—his finances were in a very embarrassed condition.

The last thing Theresia desired to do was to celebrate his homecoming. She had just given birth to Jules

Adolphe Edouard Cabarrus, the future doctor and the second of the two children that were conceived and born during the absence of the Terrorist, for whom a rapprochement with his wife was therefore rendered peculiarly difficult.

Our knowledge of Tallien's character justifies the belief that he had great hopes of making something out of a woman whom, though she had renounced his name, he could legally compel to live with him in the conjugal domicile were it but a garret.

It is difficult to discover precisely what took place at this juncture. There was a discussion, but, whatever was the result, neither got conspicuously the best of it. We will give the different versions and consider what conclusions may with most likelihood be deduced from them.

The only external evidence we possess in regard to the matter is furnished by Laitulier, who says: "Some highly placed friends of his told him that while he was away his wife had had two children, and warned him that she would give him a very unfavourable reception."

That is precisely what one would expect. Just when she was endeavouring to regain a little credit in Ouvrard's eyes Theresia must have felt extremely mortified at the idea of her second husband, the odious and indelicate creature, coming to upset all her arrangements.

Consequently she may have thought it a good move to negative his proposals in advance by giving him notice, through the medium of some third party, of her inexorable refusal to entertain them.

But would so discourteous a proceeding be sufficient to restrain an unscrupulous and penniless individual like Tallien? It was scarcely to be expected.

Nevertheless there were some who, with unshaken belief in the Terrorist's supposed affection for Theresia, affirmed that it was only after long hesitation and with

great reluctance that he at last made up his mind to begin divorce proceedings against her.*

This version of the affair would make it appear that it was the husband who took the initial step towards obtaining a separation. We should thus have to admit that the decree formally severing their union was, morally speaking, in his favour, particularly if it be added that, in the course of the proceedings, Madame Tallien afforded incontestable proof of the necessity for them by giving birth to a third child, Clarisse Gabrielle Thérésia.

Unfortunately this story is wholly inaccurate. Clarisse Gabrielle Thérésia was born on May 25, 1802 (5th Prairial, year X), and the Tallien divorce took place on April 9, more than six weeks before.

The proceedings were not instituted by Tallien, but by his wife. We here quote the deed as cited by Ch. Nauroy in "Le Curieux": "On the 8th April, 1802, a divorce was pronounced between Jeanne Marie Ignace Theresia Cabarrus, aged 28, of 685 rue de Babylone, Paris, and Jean Lambert Tallien, aged 35, of 857 rue de l'Université, Paris, formerly of 1 rue des Gourdes, son of Lambert Tallien and Jeanne Humbert."

The preliminary deeds are dated 6th Nivose, year III (the marriage certificate), three reports of family councils dated 12th Floreal (May 2), 16th Messidor (July 15), year IX, and 17th Vendémiaire (October 9), year X.

The wife alone being present, demands "le divorce à haute voix."

Clearly this is quite different from the account previously quoted.

On the other hand, we must not omit to note the following cry of protest that rises with every mark of unaffectedness and sincerity to the lips of the Princesse de Chimay.

He (Tallien) arrived just in the nick of time for the

* Turquan, "La Citoyenne Tallien," pp. 293-294.

separation proceedings. Paris was full of it. Tallien wanted to keep his wife, but then was not he himself one of the very people who had voted for the divorce laws? Justice declared for Madame Tallien. Ouvrard, who had millions to play with, offered Tallien, in the fair fugitive's name, la Chaumière in the Avenue Montaigne and an annuity of twelve thousand livres.*

The Princesse goes on to say that Tallien rejected the offer.

Let us put aside this highly improbable assertion for the moment, and analyse the passage above quoted, which is "chock full" of revelations. What is the meaning of "he arrived in the nick of time for the separation proceedings?"

Taken literally it would mean that Tallien landed in France on his return from England just when the proceedings for divorce had been commenced against him by Theresia.

There is nothing impossible or even improbable about that. Theresia had a wide circle of friends, Ouvrard one that was wider still, and these may quite well have informed them of Tallien's arrival in London and of his great lack of funds.

In this event they would have divined the danger that his return to France would threaten. To avert it they may well have decided on beginning an action for divorce, and on the Terrorist's arrival about the end of April, or the beginning of May, 1801, a preliminary family council had already been held on the 12th Floreal, year IX, which date certainly marks the commencement of the divorce proceedings hurriedly decided upon during Tallien's brief stay in London.

No sooner was he home again than the Terrorist, learning how Fortune had smiled upon his wife, began to insist on seeing her and taking possession of her again.

* "Notre Dame de Thermidor," p. 462.

He had not sufficient courage to risk getting a drubbing by putting in an appearance in the rue de Babylone, but he wrote letters. He asked for an interview. No notice was taken, so he wrote again ; he begged and prayed, he tried the pathetic note—and then he began to use threats.

These suppositions are probable enough, for it would assuredly be a desideratum to gain time before going further with the proceedings.

Does this bring us to the second family council held on July 5 (16th Messidor, year IX)? It is doubtful, for such resistance would certainly have engendered suspicion in the Terrorist's mind. It would be then that, recognising the impossibility of arriving at a voluntary agreement, he would have threatened to resort to a public declaration of his rights. " Tallien," says Houssaye, "*wanted his wife.*"

Divorce, therefore, did not enter into the question. And as the Septembriseur in his penniless condition had certainly no reason to saddle himself with a woman and another man's children into the bargain, it is clear that he was practising a sort of matrimonial blackmail. Theresia would have to live with him, were it in a garret or a stable, or pay whatever sum he might be pleased to levy as the price of her freedom. This wife of his was a precious asset. She should keep him going to the end of her days.

What took place? . . . Tallien forced the pace too much, but one can understand that, because his need was urgent. There had to be a third family council, which could not be held before the 17th Vendémiaire, year X (October 9, 1800). . . . The question was how to gain time.

It appears to us that the order of events as given in the above-quoted extract should be transposed, and that Ouvrard's generous offer, instead of being placed after the divorce, should come before it.

After the divorce there would have been no reason to make the offer, and after the divorce Tallien would not have rejected it. He would have accepted it with both hands.

Moreover, it was quite in keeping with Ouvrard's usual practice to pay his way out of an embarrassing position. He was the very man for striking a bargain or for bringing off a bribe. To gain time it is quite on the cards that he offered Tallien some monetary assistance, little payments on account.

Doubtless la Chaumière and the 12,000 livres annuity would not have been offered all at once. There would have been a certain amount of huckstering. The figure mentioned by the Princesse de Chimay was possibly greatly exaggerated. . . at any rate, Tallien who felt his bait being nibbled at, Tallien who was an old hand at extorting money, was certainly not going to relinquish his wife for a mere song, such as 12,000 livres a year and a house, to a married gallant with more than eighty millions behind him—not he ! So he tugged away as hard as he could until somewhere near the end of 1801—and then his line broke.

Without going into the case from the lawyer's point of view, we need only observe that his failure to put in a personal appearance at the hearing shows that he already felt himself a beaten man.

Of course all this is mere inference, but it rests on so solid a foundation—the deed of divorce to wit—that we may practically regard it as established fact.

We may note a curious coincidence. Precisely at the same time that Tallien, having reached home again from Egypt, had to defend an action for divorce brought against him by Theresia, the Chevalier, the pseudo Marquis de Fontenay (aux Roses) reappeared on the Continent.

On the 10th Fructidor, year X (August 28, 1802), he presented himself to the Committee of the Prefecture



THE FOYER OF THE MONTANSIER THEATRE UNDER THE CONSULATE

of the Lower Seine under the name and description of Jean Jacques Devin, French merchant, in order to obtain a residential permit.

In support of his application he affirmed that he had never received any appointment, decoration, pension, title, or pay from a foreign Power. Finally he took the oath of allegiance to the Government and stated that, prior to the Revolution, he had borne the name of Fontenay. This was hardly calculated to flatter the vanity of the *cidevant* marquise. Fontenay having made his peace with the authorities, lived a life of slothful ease, squandering the remnants of his fortune, selling his property little by little, sometimes apparently Theresia's as well—though, as it is she who tells us so, the information is suspect, the more so as the property laws of the time would have stood in the way.

Rid of Tallien, rid of Clarisse Gabrielle Thérésia, her sixth child, the fair deputy-Madame Ouvrard—who was not as yet expecting her seventh—was in a position to put in an appearance at a ball given by the Italian Ambassador Marescalchi—so at least the story goes—where, in disguise, her features hidden by a mask, she had a brief interview with the First Consul. The story derives some credit from the following passage which occurs in the *Mémorial de Sainte-Hélène* :

“ At the masked balls which he was in the habit of giving the Emperor was always sure of one particular assignation, of one tryst that was never broken. Every year, according to his story, he used to be waylaid by a certain reveller who would talk to him of the friendship that had existed between them in old days, and who begged to be vouchsafed admission to his court. The reveller in question was a very kind-hearted, good-natured, and beautiful woman, to whom many were unquestionably indebted for many favours. ‘ I do not deny that you are charming, but just consider a moment what it is you

are asking ; weigh the matter yourself and say what you would do. You have had two or three husbands, and children by everybody. No doubt a man would have deemed himself lucky to have been a party to the first slip, a second stumble might be pardoned possibly, but when it comes to a third and a fourth and goodness knows how many—well, put yourself in my place, suppose you were Emperor, what would you do? And then, too, I am supposed to be endeavouring to bring about a revival in public decorum!’ Theresia, the fair pleader, would hold her peace, or perhaps say, ‘Well, at any rate, do not deprive me of every vestige of hope,’ trusting to the following year to bring her better luck. ‘And we both punctually kept the promised tryst,’ adds the Emperor.”

Bonaparte’s curiously indulgent attitude in this matter may be accounted for when we remember that he had need of Ouvrard, as is evident from the enormous inroads he made into the latter’s millions. We have also previously observed that Ouvrard himself had his reasons for continuing to inspire Theresia with the hope of bringing about a reconciliation between herself and Josephine. But the hopes of Notre Dame de Thermidor were soon to be shattered by the First Consul’s becoming Emperor.

After she had given birth in September 1803, to the daughter (who in 1822, when she married A. F. Moissan de Vaux, was described as being “commonly called Lenoir”), Theresia Cabarrus ceased to be continually enceinte as she had been from 1800 to 1803. Was this the result of some modification in her relations with Ouvrard? It is impossible to say. It may, however, be remarked that in 1803 the ceaseless wars in which the Republic was engaged compelled the financier to expend practically all his millions in providing necessities for the troops for which he had not yet received payment. It was quite possible that he may have entertained doubts as to whether the money would ever be forthcoming, for

the more embarrassed his position became and the more his speculations turned awry, the more urgent and imperious the demands of Bonaparte grew, and Ouvrard found himself helplessly entailed.

Theresia Cabarrus was certainly aware of the ever-increasing anxieties that disturbed Ouvrard's peace of mind. She was now a witness of his alarms, and doubtless wondered whether the resources—already somewhat curtailed perhaps—for which she relied on her protector would not soon fail her altogether.

To entertain such calculating views would not have argued a generous mind, but that she did entertain them is so highly probable that we may regard it as established fact. As to whether Ouvrard felt aggrieved, all the light that his own memoirs and contemporary records have thrown upon this singular character would lead us to reply in the negative.

Ouvrard was too clever, too great a cynic, too much of a gallant, to be indignant at Theresia's ingratitude. He probably knew her better than she knew herself, and the small esteem in which he doubtless held her capacity for affection enabled him to look upon her selfishness at this crisis without surprise.

Far from expecting her to evince a loyalty of which her nature was incapable, he, no doubt, met her half-way and begged her to take precautions in case his affairs should take an unsatisfactory turn. This perfect understanding between them explains how it was that their separation, which took place shortly afterwards, was unmarked by any crisis on one side or the other.

Theresia Cabarrus was now entertaining on a large scale. She was on the look-out for another protector, and it therefore behoved her at this juncture to increase rather than curtail the circle of her acquaintance.

In a volume of contemporary memoirs entitled *Un hiver à Paris sous le Consulat*, Monsieur Reinhardt, who

was among the guests at the house in the rue de Babylone, counted between seventy and eighty people there, and says that the mistress of the house wore herself out in entertaining her guests.

She was for ever on her feet, passing from group to group with such feverish restlessness that it was impossible to carry on a reasonable conversation with such a busy hostess.

She would step forward to meet the ladies—foreigners for the most part, Englishwomen being in the majority—made them welcome and found suitable places for them. “She would seat herself first by one and then by another, but she was never still, and a group of cavaliers, eager to do her bidding, were always dancing attendance on her.”

Knowing how superficial were the qualities of la belle Cabarrus, we may take it that she adopted this means of avoiding other than merely complimentary conversations and engaging in topics in which she would have found it impossible to conceal beneath an elegant exterior the intellectual poverty within.

The foreigners, the Englishwomen who gathered round her, eager to behold her in her home, to scrutinise her and listen to her as though she were some strange animal, would have swiftly taken her measure had she given them the opportunity for more than a fleeting conversation. Having very likely fallen a victim on one or two occasions to these inquisitive islanders, she made up her mind not to let herself be caught again.

Reinhardt mentions that Rose Thermidor was present at this soirée, and remarks that she danced agreeably. She was like her mother, and she was no doubt tall for her age as her mother had been, for our traveller takes her for ten, whereas her birth had taken place in 1795.

With the stolid perseverance of his race, Reinhardt stayed on till the last, hoping perhaps that he would at

length manage to secure an "interesting" interview with Theresia, but, worn out with fatigue, she sank back in an armchair and, burying her face in the cushions, gasped out in scarcely audible tones, "I can bear no more, I am simply dead with weariness."

Hereupon the kindhearted Reinhardt deemed it becoming to express his sympathy, when, all of a sudden, the "comédienne" started up "as though driven by a spring. 'Oh! but things are not so bad as that!' she cried with a smile. 'There were a great many people, were there not, though?' she added."

Excellent though her constitution was, she had drawn upon it to such an extent for the past fifteen years that when she reached the age of thirty there were already signs of a breakdown. Reinhardt had placed his finger on a wound that was beginning to open never to heal again. Theresia's decline had begun.

But what a fighter she was! Her lingering guest, in thus describing the promptitude with which our coquette pulled herself together, catches her as it were in the very act of playing a mummer's part. Her previous exhaustion had betrayed her. The elasticity of her temperament was beginning to wane.

Her reliance on pretence and artifice became, as we shall have occasion to observe, increasingly apparent as time went on. Here it will suffice to record the fact that it was just when Ouvrard was about to fail her—note that he did not put in an appearance at this soirée—that she set about playing the greatest comedy of her life; and she played it in order to ensure her means of existence and to win the title of Comtesse de Caraman.

Meanwhile, despite the cares by which Ouvrard was haunted, her existence, for such a frivolous creature, appears to have been pleasant enough, had not her vanity preyed upon her in the moral, nay, almost in the

physical sense, like the vulture that tore at the entrails of Prometheus.

In her "little place" in the rue de Babylone the one time Queen of the Directoire, cast off by the Bonapartes, surrounded by foreigners eager to behold the quondam Notre Dame de Thermidor, must have bitterly lamented the "snows of yesteryear," and have engendered that malady of the liver from which no past master in the art of therapeutics was ever destined to deliver her.

And Tallien, her accomplice, were his slumbers less untroubled? Did the memory of all his countless victims weigh upon his conscience and haunt his dreams, as they haunted the dreams of Cambacérès? Be this as it may, his days were full of heart-breaking trials.

Vainly he wandered from one end of Paris to the other searching for something to do to keep body and soul together. Every one turned a deaf ear to his entreaties. People were afraid of compromising themselves by having anything to do with him. As for Bonaparte, he was not content with merely bestowing his contempt upon him, he loathed him. He looked upon the fact that Tallien and Barras had been witnesses at his marriage as a double disgrace. How, then, could Tallien possibly approach him? His very name reminded Bonaparte of his wife's infidelities. What had he got to recommend him in the eyes of a man who set such a value on order as Napoleon? What had he in his record but a long list of robberies and crimes? What could he boast of but anarchy, treason, and—what Bonaparte hated most of all—cowardice. However, he had another string to his bow—something like a scorpion's dart. There was a secret understanding between him and Fouché. He knew some things about Talleyrand of which the general run of people were ignorant.

Fouché, who was supported by Talleyrand, decided to make an appeal to the Master and, after a deal of



JEAN JACQUES REGIS DE CAMBACÈRES
From a painting by Builly after a bust taken from life by Roland

trouble, succeeded in prevailing upon the coming Emperor to give the poor wretch a consulship in Spain. "Let him go and get hanged in Alicante then," said Napoleon. "It is his father-in-law's country. Let them play the Jew together."

It was a bitter jest! François Cabarrus, who was no longer his father-in-law, took good care not to mix himself up with a wretch who had fallen so low, lower even than the state into which he had been born, with a creature whose luckless plight was but emphasised by the semi-diplomatic position conferred upon him.

Nevertheless Tallien accepted the offer, and set out. What, indeed, would he not have accepted? We shall see him accepting something very different before long.

From this point until her third marriage the life of Theresia Cabarrus was without incident.

If she indulged some hopes of a Royalist restoration—it is hardly likely that she did, but her connexions with foreigners, particularly with English people, would appear to lend some colour to such a theory—such hopes were rudely shattered by the execution of the Duc d'Enghien, by the decree of the Senate creating Napoleon Emperor of the French, and by his solemn coronation which took place on December 2, 1804.

While Josephine thus attained the very zenith of her glory, Theresia, divorced successively by Fontenay and Tallien, saw in Ouvrard's ruin the downfall of her sole remaining protection.

Nevertheless nine months later, on the 15th Thermidor, in the thirteenth year of the Republic—that is to say, on August 3, 1805—she wedded the Comte de Caraman, a most unlooked-for turn of fortune which saved her from an early and ignominious eclipse.

On the grounds that, after having thus concluded an honourable alliance, she lived aloof from politics, the biographers have decided that her interest from the

historian's point of view ended with this marriage, and have refrained from following up her story further. Seeing, however, that she was now but thirty-two years old, and that she still had some thirty more years to live * this appears a somewhat too arbitrary abridgment of the tale.

Arsène Houssaye, indeed, does not entirely concur in such neglectful treatment of the *Princesse de Chimay*. He has something to tell us about her, and quotes a few of her letters—which we will analyse later on—doing his best to invest her final moments with the glamour of poetry. But even including the space occupied by these letters, he does not bestow more than fifteen pages to the career of our heroine as *Princesse de Chimay*. It is evident, though he does not say as much, that he was anxious to curtail the story of the last phase of Theresia's life out of consideration for the feelings of the de Chimay family. While we do not for a moment find fault with the delicacy which dictated this reticence on his part, it seems to us completely thrown away, since, to avoid wounding the feelings of the de Chimays, it would have been necessary either to say nothing at all about her career as Madame Tallien or else to have cut short the account of that career at the year 1804, entirely ignoring the fact that she married the Comte de Caraman.

But it is clear that to have practised such a childish subterfuge would have caused all the critics to exclaim, "But what happened to her after she became *Princesse de Chimay*?" One cannot erase so lightly what is graven on the page of history. Even this modest sketch has entailed the examination of more than three hundred documents containing direct or indirect mention of Madame Tallien. How could any one imagine that such a host of papers could disappear without being

* She died on January 15, 1835, at the age of approximately sixty-one and a half years.

read and quoted? That some such idea did or does exist is manifested by the fact that, in the course of our researches, we have constantly been sensible of an obstinate determination to conceal from the public everything connected with Madame Tallien. We will content ourselves with giving two typical examples. The Bibliothèque Nationale used at one time to contain a pamphlet concerning Theresia published at the commencement of the Revolution, and entitled *Fragoletta* (it was from the pen of Méhé de la Touche). It is there no longer. A few years ago a collection of papers, many of them concerning Madame Tallien, were offered for sale. They were purchased at an advanced figure by the de Chimay family, from whom, as is well known, it is quite impossible to obtain any information concerning the celebrated "Reine du Directoire."

The immediate descendants of undesirable parents may not unreasonably apprehend the mistrust of their fellows, but with the lapse of time the most potent of hereditary influences disappear, so that it would be ridiculous to suspect the probity of a present-day descendant of Tallien on the grounds that Tallien himself was a good-for-nothing scoundrel.

This aspect of the case should suffice to make it permissible to tell the whole truth about Theresia, both as Madame Tallien and as Princesse de Chimay—provided always that the writer is actuated solely by zeal for historic truth.

But even supposing time did not eliminate hereditary influences, it would be not only the right but the duty of the chronicler to seek out and give to the world the truth concerning people who have long been dead, and whose deeds have become, by very lapse of time, the lawful property of the historian.

Progress would be impossible, Justice and Truth would be set at nought, if this natural right were overridden

out of regard for a man's descendants, whatever might be their social position. This consideration it is that has caused us to make up our minds not to imitate the scruples of the biographers with regard to the de Chimay family. After all, even they would perhaps have shown themselves less reticent had they possessed any documentary evidence regarding the last thirty years of la belle Tallien's career. As for Houssaye's materials they only consist of what he succeeded in gathering from the children of la belle Tallien, that is to say, just what that lady chose to give out for the benefit of posterity. That was little enough, and it is so obviously untrue that at first one is sorely tempted to reject it altogether.

We think that there is no reason to make such a sacrifice out of disdain or under the pretext—more or less sincere—of respect for the feelings of others. When, moreover, we come to search beneath the vainglorious fictions of the *Princesse de Chimay*, for the facts which they obscure but do not really hide, we see that these facts reveal themselves to strict and systematic analysis.

Notre Dame de Chimay is not so intimately connected with our national history as the pseudo *Marquise de Fontenay*, *Madame Tallien*, and the deputy-*Madame Ouvrard*. She is in no sense a public character. Nevertheless her later life was not exempt from struggles and dramatic situations; it was, so to speak, the reverse of the medal, which one must see in order to satisfy oneself as to the real value of the article as a whole.

According to a police report of the 16th Ventôse, year XIII (March 7, 1805)—about five months, that is to say, before her marriage—she made the acquaintance of the Comte François Joseph Philippe Caraman at the house of Madame de Staël.

The Emperor knew that Madame de Staël's attitude towards him was not of the friendliest, and he had her kept under observation. Spies insinuated themselves

into her salons, and certain gossips, having given out that a match was brewing between the Comte de Caraman and la belle Tallien, these spies would naturally cry, "The Comte de Caraman? Why, Theresia Cabarrus met him at Necker's daughter's."

If it be asked how it was that the rumours of the approaching marriage leaked out more than five months before it actually took place, the answer is that on January 2, 1805, François Joseph Philippe Riquet, before Maître Dunay, a Paris notary, and in the presence of witnesses, formally put himself in opposition to his father, Victor Maurice Riquet de Caraman, who had as formally forbidden the marriage between his son and Theresia.

The father, who had served as lieutenant-general in the armies of France, whose wife—now dead—had been cast into prison during the Terror, evidently considered it unbecoming for his son to marry a woman who had been first the concubine and next the discarded wife of one of the very ruffians who had brought about his mother's imprisonment. As soon as he saw that he was powerless to prevent this outrage against decency, he shouted his condemnation from the housetops so that all should know that he dissociated himself from the conduct of his erring son.

Though no one has described them, we can well imagine the scenes that must have taken place between the heir of the Caramans and the author of his being on the subject of this truly scandalous match.

Doubtless François Joseph used all his diplomacy and endeavoured to pave the way with infinite care before declaring his intention to contract a union so totally at variance with the ideas of the ex-lieutenant-general; doubtless, too, he left nothing unsaid in the way of prayers and courteous representations before having recourse, on January 2, 1805, to the final extremity of bringing the law into operation.

All this shows that his mind must have been thoroughly made up long before January 2. It would be no exaggeration to assign two or three months to the struggle between father and son, which would put the initial and friendly stages of the negotiations as far back as October or November 1804.

On the other hand, however rapidly love may have overwhelmed François de Caraman, he would hardly have rushed into matrimony like a mere schoolboy, for he was thirty-three when he perpetrated this "amazing marriage."

To fall in love with a woman is one thing, to marry her is another. Allowing that he became enamoured of Theresia at first sight, and wished to possess her immediately, we must also allow that she would not have brought off the marriage at all had she yielded too readily to the assault.

At this period the ex-Notre Dame de Septembre was verging on thirty-one, and fifteen of these thirty-one years she had spent in the closest contact with the male animal. She knew him through and through, and she knew that yielding too swiftly to his importunities nearly always meant being left in the lurch.

Ouvrard was now but an old and leaky galleon. He was sinking fast. She must needs cast off from him at all costs, and seek a safer vessel. François Riquet hove in sight, and for him she decided to make. But she determined to attach herself to him by no mere flimsy towline: she would unite herself to him with the strongest grappling irons, hold him with the stoutest chains. No, we need not doubt that Theresia employed all the artifices of which she was capable in order to achieve so difficult and so valuable a conquest.

It would not be excessive to assign three or four months to the duration of her struggle to bring François de Caraman up to the point of marriage. It may thus

be inferred with practical certainty that it was the middle of 1804, or perhaps a trifle earlier, that witnessed the beginning of la belle Tallien's manœuvres to ensnare her future "third."

As to the de Caramans, we will hear what the Baronne d'Oberkirch has to say about them, which will be more than Theresia knew of them when she first conceived the hope of marrying into the family.

We will put ourselves back into the Eighteenth Century. Louis XVI and Marie Antoinette have but recently been married. The heir to the Russian throne had espoused a princess who is a friend and fellow countrywoman of the Baronne d'Oberkirch. The future Empress is journeying through France with her husband, accompanied by her beloved friend the Baronne. The illustrious travellers have only been a short time in Paris. They are the recipients of adulatory verses, and similar compliments are bestowed on Madame d'Oberkirch when she appears in public or when she goes out shopping.

"I was presented with these verses," she tells us, "after the opera at the Princesse de Chimay's, lady-in-waiting to the Queen, where I was calling before going on to supper at Madame de Mackau's. The Princesse de Chimay was, as I have said, a very gracious and charming woman, equally distinguished for her elegance and her virtues. The dowager Princesse de Chimay, her sister-in-law, is one of Madame Victoire's adies; she was a Lepelletier de Saint Fargean. She is a widow of the eldest brother, for there were three brothers. The Prince de Chimay, the Prince d'Henin's brother, had married Mademoiselle de Fitz-James, whose father the Duc de Fitz-James, was Governor of Limousin. They belong to the family of d'Henin d'Alsace or d'Henin Liétard. Their sister, Mademoiselle d'Alsace, married the Comte de Caraman Riquet, a descendant of the engineer who

planned the Languedoc Canal. The mother of the Princes de Chimay and the Prince d'Henin was a Beauvan-Craon. The title of Prince de Chimay was formerly borne by the Princes de Ligne, and passed by marriage to the d'Henins."

François Joseph Caraman was a grandson of the great Riquet, the Baron de Bonrepos, the constructor of the Languedoc Canal, as mentioned by Madame d'Oberkirch. During the Revolution he had been compelled to emigrate, and, being without resources, had been reduced to giving lessons on the violin at Hamburg.

The Revolution having been brought to an end by Bonaparte, the de Caramans re-entered into possession of their property—an immense fortune, so it was said—and shortly after his marriage François Joseph succeeded to the inheritance of the Prince de Chimay in Tuscany.

In brief, the year 1804 was a highly important one for Theresia by reason of her intrigue with François Joseph Caraman, nor did the first half of 1805 prove any the less so, owing to the legal wranglings to which the match gave rise. The concluding months of the year may be regarded as having been given up to honeymooning with the new husband.

It is a question whether the incident of the *bal masqué* at the Tuileries related by Georgette Ducrest took place before or after the marriage; if, that is to say, it took place at all.

In her volume entitled "Mémoires sur l'Impératrice Joséphine," Madame de Genlis' charming daughter records such a number of fantastic anecdotes that one hardly dares believe in the truth of all the reminiscences with which she enlivens her narrative. It is therefore with all reserve that we repeat the story to which we have alluded.

Thanks, so the tale goes, to some one else's invitation

card and to a disguise she had adopted, Theresia Cabarrus—or the Comtesse de Caraman we must call her if the event took place during the winter of 1805—succeeded in gaining admission to the Tuileries. It is superfluous to observe that she had not gone there to remain incognito the whole of the time. Her vanity would have impelled her to reveal herself, for she would never have been satisfied if she had not been recognised by a host of notabilities. We must therefore take it that, since she did not simply remove her mask—and that would have been rather too rash—she got into touch with a certain number of the guests to whom she disclosed her identity under a promise of secrecy.

Like every secret confided to several people, this one did not have to wait till the next day to become common property. It spread like wildfire, particularly in regions where it was least intended to penetrate ; and, lo ! on a sudden the rash woman found herself confronted by one of the revellers—a grey domino flanked by two tall dark-skinned companions, who barred her way. No gesture, no smile, no word, no movement of impatience or revolt could free her from the domination of this insolent and stony stare. She shook from head to foot as it flashed upon her that, in all the palace, there was but one man, and one only, who would dare treat her in this manner. She saw it all. Those two swarthy giants, as mute as their chief, were Napoleon's famous Mamelukes, and she turned and fled panting from the gaze of the sombre and silent Emperor.

There is such a romantic flavour about this story that it is not easy to relate it without a smile. Still it must be observed that it fits in admirably with the dispositions and temperaments of the two personages concerned. Madame Georgette Ducrest does not tell us the name of the hapless intruder, but she unmistakably hints at Theresia ; and her anxiety to reveal her heroine's identity

without disclosing her name says not a little for the truth of the story.

Whether the incident took place before or after her marriage, it is at all events worthy of note that it coincided pretty closely with the relinquishing of the persevering attempts she had made up to then to renew her former relations with the Bonapartes. But one is inclined to the view that it must have happened during the winter of 1805, because then Theresia would have got rid of Ouvrard and have become Comtesse de Caraman.

From 1806 onwards Cabarrus' daughter seemed to have become a different woman.

The comedies and dramas of the Revolution which she had beheld so close at hand had disillusioned her regarding the Republican régime. The Imperial Court, despite the real glory which illumined it, contained too many parvenus to prove as strong an attraction as the Monarchy. Moreover, she now belonged to the genuine aristocracy through her husband. The character of her friendships and connexions now underwent a complete change, and, as the years went by, she became ever more and more of a Royalist. However, particularly at first, though nominally a genuine Comtesse, she found herself relegated as it were to the antechambers of that aristocratic society to which she was so anxious to gain access.

We will now proceed to examine the essential features of the marriage certificate : they throw a valuable light on our subject. The document reads as follows :

“ Register of Marriage Certificates Year XIII, Paris, Xème. Mairie.

“ 15th Thermidor, year XIII of the Republic, at four o'clock in the afternoon. Certificate of Marriage of François Joseph Philippe Riquet Caraman, aged 33, born in Paris on the 20th November, 1771, and residing at No. 1530 rue St. Dominique, in that city, propriétaire,

son of Victor Maurice Riquet Caraman, ex-lieutenant-general in the Armies of France, domiciled in Paris, in the street and house above mentioned, and of Marie Anne Gabrielle Joseph Françoise Xavière d'Alsace d'Henin Liènard Chimay, his deceased wife.

“ And of Jeanne Marie Ignace Theresia Cabarrus, aged 32 years, born in the parish of Saint Pierre de Caravanchel de Arriba, within the jurisdiction of Madrid in Spain, on the 31st July, 1773, divorced wife of Jean Jacques Devin de Fontenay, her first husband, and of Jean Lambert Tallien, her second husband, as appears from a certified copy of an extract from the registers of the Etat Civil of the 1st Arrondissement of Paris, dated 18th Germinal, year X, resident in the rue de Babilone (*sic*), Paris, daughter of Monsieur le Comte Cabarrus, Councillor of State in the service of his Catholic Majesty, domiciled in Barcelona, and at present resident at Bayonne, and of Madame Marie Antoinette Galabert, his wife, resident at Valencia, Spain, both consenting parties to their daughter's marriage, the said Comtesse de Cabarrus giving her assent by a deed given under her private seal and signed by her at Valencia on the 7th February last and duly registered in Paris under to-day's date ; Monsieur le Comte de Caraman reiterating his consent to the said marriage through Monsieur Etienne Didier Guerey, ex-cavalry officer, of 27 rue de la Sourdière, Paris, his attorney duly appointed for the purpose by deed executed before Duhaldé, notary, at Bayonne, the 19th of Messidor last, registered on the same day, the said Sieur Guerey in the said name being present and consenting unto the said marriage.”

Thus, in 1805, we find that François Cabarrus was living at Bayonne and his wife at Valencia in Spain. One wonders whether this peculiar situation of husband and wife had its origin in some stroke of ill luck for the financier or whether the relations between them were a little strained.

In the marriage certificate they are referred to as the Comte and Comtesse de Cabarrus. This is the first we hear of the title, and it would be interesting to know how it was acquired. There would be no reason to suspect its validity if we did not know that François de Cabarrus was made a Comte in 1808, three years later, by Napoleon's brother, then King of Spain, on the termination of the Imperial campaigns.

We are inclined to think that François Cabarrus would not have had this title conferred upon him by King Joseph Bonaparte if he already possessed a similar title properly bestowed by the genuine representative of an ancient dynasty. On the other hand, there would be nothing out of the ordinary in King Joseph confirming in 1808 a title that had been previously usurped in 1805. Much in the same way Caron, who assumed the name de Beaumarchais, had his improvised patent confirmed later on by Louis XVI.

The husband's witnesses were Victor Leterrier and Louis Nicolas Jarot, aged 41 and 44 respectively, both members of the legal profession, and reputed friends of the bridegroom. The witnesses on behalf of the bride were François Jourhueil (aged 40), also a lawyer, and a Government clerk, aged 63, named Pierre Saintin.

Theresia could bring no one of any particular note to act as her witnesses—she wished to conceal from her friends that the marriage was taking place in spite of the formal opposition of the Caraman family. The husband, on his side, was supported by no member of his family, no one belonging to his own set. This surely implies a pretty marked disapproval of the match. The old French nobility stayed away in order to indicate by their absence how strongly they condemned what they held to be a peculiarly scandalous alliance on the part of one of their own members. How long was this ostracism of the Caraman Cabarrus family going to last ?

François Joseph, now in possession of his Theresia, gave himself up heart and soul to tasting the delights of his prize, whose charms, though somewhat declined from their zenith, were still temptingly beautiful; and he probably paid little heed to an isolation which only enabled him to devote himself the more wholeheartedly to the object of his passion. With the Comtesse Riquet de Caraman Cabarrus it was far otherwise. The disdain of the aristocracy stung her to the quick.

She was doubtless tasting the full bitterness of her position when a most unexpected diversion was created by the sudden demise of the Prince de Chimay.

In order to enter into possession of the inheritance to which he thus became entitled François Joseph de Caraman proceeded to Tuscany accompanied by his Countess.

Ever since the Treaty of Lunéville, which had been signed in February 1801, the Duke of Parma, having been promoted to be ruler of the Kingdom of Etruria—which comprised the Grand Duchy of Tuscany and Cisalpina—had been holding his “court” at Florence, where Artaud the French chargé d'affaires gave him such a glowing account of Theresia, accentuating the part she had played on the Ninth of Thermidor, and maintaining a discreet silence concerning her exploits in the world of gallantry, that the King readily consented to receive her.

If the loveliness of the costume which Theresia wore at the Pitti for this reception is any index of her joy, she was immeasurably delighted.

The supplement to the *Biographie Michaud* tells us that “she appeared in a robe of velvet embroidered at Lyons of a severe pattern.” Since the Consulate there had been no more of those shamelessly scanty costumes that had been the scandal of the Directoire régime. “Her gown was considered so remarkable that the

Italians declared they had never beheld anything so magnificent, and copies were made of the embroidery designs." *

What a triumph to be sure !

"A few weeks later," says Villenave again, "Joseph Bonaparte, who had been occupying the throne of the Bourbons at Naples on which he had been placed by Napoleon at the end of 1806, and who had been to establish his dominion over the insurgent Neapolitans and Calabrians in March of that year, considered that, as the Comtesse de Caraman had been received at Florence, he would be sufficiently justified in allowing her the entrée to his Court at Naples."

After receiving these two official marks of favour from Royalty itself—one of the Royalties being Napoleon's own brother—the Comtesse de Caraman Cabarrus and the Empress Josephine were surely indulging no extravagant hopes in thinking that the Emperor would abate something of his severity. Hence the meetings between the two old friends at Malmaison that took place shortly after Theresia's return from Italy.

The exact dates are lacking, but the sequence of events as we have stated them is reasonable and no other arrangement of them would be consistent with established facts. The reception at Naples must necessarily have taken place some time after March 1806, for the simple reason that, prior to that date, Joseph Bonaparte had not entered into possession of his kingdom. Again, it was on October 27 that Napoleon, after the victories of Jena, Auerstadt, Prenslau, and Lubeck, made his entry into Berlin. It was there, too, that on November 21, 1806, he signed the decree proclaiming the Continental blockade against England. It was consequently about this time that he wrote to the Empress from Berlin flatly

* See under "Chimay" an article by Villenave in the Supplement to the *Biographie Michaud*.

ordering her to discontinue receiving her former friend at Malmaison.

Henceforth Theresia's hopes were blasted. Josephine was too kindhearted to disclose the terms of the letter in which the Emperor had referred to her friend as a woman “ *d'horreur et d'infamie*,” and to her husband as a “ *misérable* ” for having married her with her eight bastards ; but the Imperial decision had been formulated in terms of such severity that the Empress had no alternative but to give her friend plainly to understand that she could never receive her again.

We have by this time gained sufficient insight into Theresia's nature to know that this crowning veto of the Emperor's must have been the cruellest blow of her whole career. Nevertheless in 1806 her vanity had not yet been completely curbed since, instead of blaming herself alone for the fact that she was publicly treated as a pariah, she attempted, for many years to come—almost indeed to the end of her days—to force her way into the higher realms of society, whose members, however, were just as determined to exclude her.

From the numerous proofs which her incorrigible vanity affords us of her inability to comprehend the situation, we can easily picture her to ourselves as railing against the Bonapartes for their ingratitude instead of recognising that she herself had been to blame.

What would Napoleon be if it had not been for her ? we can imagine her asking. Look how kindly she had welcomed him when he came to Paris eleven years before without money, without clothes, and without employment. Had she not generously opened her salons, ay ! and her arms, to him ? Did he not owe his military and political fortune to the way she had exerted herself on his behalf with Barras and Josephine, and Ouvrard too, that lordly prince of finance whom the Corsican had ruined and stripped just as a brigand with a dagger at

his victim's throat might strip him of all he possessed in the outskirts of some lonely wood. A mere adventurer, an upstart, he had no ancient blood in his veins like the Comte de Caraman, now the Prince de Chimay. Truly a pretty sort of individual to play the Puritan, seeing that his wife had made a cuckold of him times without number, and would do so again with any chance comer. His own sisters, too! A pretty reputation they possessed! It was all very well for him to go making dukes and princes out of the greatest scapegraces in his army, and to rob legitimate monarchs of their thrones in order to perch his own relations and favourites upon them; his amazing fortune would soon turn, and when the day of his fall came Theresia would enjoy a triumphant revenge, for, by virtue of her marriage, she would be an exalted and legitimate princess, acknowledged by every royal house, while the wretched little Italian upstart would be nothing at all.

Such, we may take it, were the sort of ideas that were occupying Theresia's mind towards the end of 1806, for in those aristocratic circles—from which she was still excluded, but whose echoes were conveyed to her through her husband—people were waiting expectantly all through the years from 1804 to 1815 for the fall of the Empire, just as the overthrow of the Republican régime was awaited from 1792 to 1804.

The upper classes, who, since the days of Louis XIII, had grown strangers to the practice of those warlike arts which had originally given them a legitimate pre-eminence, were now incapable of anything but of longing and waiting for the return of better times. The Royalists would never win back France, and if regained it were to be it would only be with the aid of foreign rulers.

After 1806, the Comtesse de Caraman, who as yet did not venture to call herself a Princess—she contented



From an engraving by Kneller after a painting by Gros

herself with signing her letters "Caraman-Chimay"—vainly directed her gaze towards the court of the future King.

The glories of the Empire had grown brighter than ever, Spain and Portugal had been relinquished by their sovereigns, and Joseph Bonaparte—who was to give up the throne of Naples to Murat—was shortly to hold sway over the whole of the Spanish Peninsula.

It was now that François Cabarrus was to be made a count, or to have the title which he had illegally assumed officially confirmed by Napoleon's brother.

However, all this diplomatic shuffling aroused the anger of the Spanish and Portuguese, and there were outbreaks at the end of May and June 16, 1808. The kingship of Joseph Bonaparte had endured but a day; but, while Cabarrus profited by the welter of events to the extent of acquiring a dubious title, they brought Tallien the loss of his Alicante consulate, for the insurgents drove him forth after sacking and burning his house, robbing him—according to his subsequent account of the matter—of a meagre hoard of ten thousand francs, which constituted the whole of his fortune.

This cruel misadventure brought the ex-Conventionnel back again to France, but in what woeful plight!

The Duchesse d'Abrantès, who accompanied her husband, Junot, to Spain, saw him a short time before at a dinner given by General Beurnouville at Madrid. "Seated near me," she says, "was a tall man, with a hideous, sinister-looking face, who never uttered a word. He was tall and dark, with a morose, dejected appearance. He had a somewhat lowering look about the eyes. At first you thought he had lost the sight of one of them, but you soon saw that he had what is called a cast in the eye. He was taciturn, spoke but little, and, to tell the truth,

no one had very much to say to him. Poor wretch ! What a miserable life he was living then ! ” *

“ When he returned to France,” writes Lenotre, “ he had lost one eye, and his face was covered with an eruption. He buried himself alive—at the age of four-and-forty—shunning the sight of his fellows, a disheartened, stricken, and forgotten man.”

Possibly these bodily ailments were a painful reminiscence of his sojourn in Egypt, where diseases of the eye and skin abound. However, he was not so disfigured as all this in 1802, when he attempted to hold his wife to ransom prior to the divorce, nor would such an invalid have been appointed to a consulship at Alicante. But it is extremely likely that these ophthalmic and dermatological troubles were the outcome of an attack of syphilis which he had not properly treated when in Egypt, for Tallien’s Paris acquaintances in 1797 and 1798 were low enough to make this explanation quite probable.

Are we to accept the statement that Theresia at this juncture made an offer of money to her former accomplice which he rejected, and another of a lodging in La Chaumière which he accepted ?

Lenotre flatly contradicts this story. In a brief article which he devotes to Tallien’s later years, we read as follows :

“ At the beginning of the Restoration he lived during the winter in a humble lodging at No 4 rue Chabanaïs, but as soon as the long days came round, he used to transfer his quarters to the Allée des Veuves, whither the memory of Theresia irresistibly attracted him. Despite what has been said to the contrary, he lived in La Chaumière no more. The property having increased in value had been split up into lots, and he had taken

* *Duchesse d’Abrantès’s Memoirs*. Madame d’Abrantès’s statement is borne out by what Houssaye says—without citing his authority, by the way—about Tallien’s being very ill in Spain.

a little double-fronted house in a market garden, much closer to the Rond-Point. There he passed his days, none with him save a female servant—never writing a word, never reading a line, simply brooding on the past.

“He might have been seen, beneath the elms of the avenue, hobbling along with little gouty steps, leaning heavily on his stick. He used to make his way as far as the Seine, where he would come to a halt and gaze at what had formerly been La Chaumière, but was now transformed into a sort of tavern called ‘The Acacia,’ after an old surviving tree in what had once been Theresia’s garden. The place was only frequented by carters and laundry women, and none could tell who the woe-begone pedestrian was or what he came thither to gaze at.”

Lenotre does not disclose the nature of the evidence on which he bases this description. Moreover, the picture he draws for us is that of a lover dwelling on the memory of a deep and lasting attachment. That is not the real Tallien, and such a failure to understand his character tends to throw a doubt on the correctness of the whole story, charming though it is.]

The Comtesse de Caraman Chimay undoubtedly detested the assassin, against whom all doors were inexorably shut. His hideous reputation, which entailed her, and from which she had vainly endeavoured to dissociate herself, was enough to make her loathe the Septembriseur. But she must have recognised by 1808 that even if Tallien were to die she would not be delivered from the infamy of her past, and that to leave him in misery, and so prompt him to revenge, was a policy fraught with grave danger to her peace of mind.

In the exile to which the Emperor consigned her—and not only the Emperor, but her husband’s relatives and a large number of other noble families—an exile which so sorely wounded her vanity, she was necessarily afraid of

anything that might tend to recall the scandalous life she had led from 1789 to 1800.

If Tallien should take it into his head to publish a pamphlet like the one which appeared against her at the beginning of the Revolution under the title "*Fragoletta*" she was undone.

Why, if Tallien were at bay, why should he spare her? She knew the feelings of vanity and envy with which her second husband was animated; she knew the utter unscrupulousness of the man who had engineered the September massacres. She therefore trembled, and in order to avoid a vengeance that was only too probable, stifled her animosity and commissioned some trustworthy and secret go-between to bribe him with food and lodging on her behalf.

The lodging was there ready to hand in *La Chaumière*, and Tallien—even if, according to Lenotre, he was not installed there in 1820—may quite easily have occupied it twelve years before, ere yet it had been metamorphosed into the "*Acacia*" tavern.

But our hypotheses—which, however, are the outcome of a strictly logical process of deduction—apply especially to 1808, just after Tallien's expulsion from Spain, and before he had obtained the pension which he continued to draw until 1816 as an ex-consul of the Imperial Government.

It was, indeed, on his return from Spain, when he had not a stiver to call his own, that he was most to be feared. Later on, when he was in enjoyment of a Government pension and of private assistance from some generous benefactors (of which more hereafter), he became much less dangerous to Madame de Caraman Chimay, and if she had wanted to parcel out *La Chaumière* in order to dispose of it in lots, she would then have had no hesitation in turning Tallien out, offering perhaps to make amends for evicting him by securing him another lodging in the

same Allée des Veuves in order not to take him out of his groove or interfere with his tastes.

* * *

As a compensation perhaps for the anxieties which the Septembriseur's return engendered in the mind of Madame de Caraman, a source of satisfaction was vouchsafed her in 1808, for on August 20 in that year she became a mother for the eighth time, and brought into the world Joseph de Chimay.*

On this occasion her lying-in did not interfere with any of her arrangements—she had by this time given up “practical” intrigues—indeed, it brought joy to her heart, inasmuch as it drew closer the bonds between her husband and herself at a time when he had probably not made up his mind as to what attitude to adopt with regard to the social ostracism to which she was destined always to be subjected.

It would be pleasant to suppose that the satisfaction thus entertained by the mother was not without benefit to the son; that he profited by acts of tenderness and solicitude which had been denied to his predecessors; and that Madame de Caraman-Chimay-Cabarrus, by means of this belated maternal affection, became acquainted with ideas and feelings of a loftier character than those which had hitherto formed the staple of her existence.

* * *

In 1809 no event occurs to signalise the existence of the Caraman-Cabarrus household. We inquire in vain as to their doings. Were they in France? Or in Spain? Were they travelling? No one knows.

What we can assert with certainty, however, is that Theresia was deeply moved by Josephine's divorce.

* This son became the father of three children. The eldest became Foreign Minister in Belgium; the second was Madame de Beauforemont-Bibesco.

It would naturally be expected that, after this important event, the erstwhile friend of la belle Tallien, having become mistress of her own actions, would have renewed her intercourse with the Comtesse de Caraman. Nevertheless it is practically certain that the two "Reines du Directoire" did not resume their intimacy, since no document, no report makes mention of it. After the divorce the ex-Empress was generously permitted by Napoleon to retain so much of her former state that Theresia could not have seen her without her visits exciting public remark. As to what kept them apart we have plenty of theories but no proofs. It might have been that the dethroned Empress still respected the antipathies of her former husband; or Madame de Caraman may never have forgiven Josephine for having obeyed Napoleon's command never to see her; or else—who knows?—the explanation may be that the Princesse de Chimay considered it beneath her dignity to renew relations with one who had been banished from the Imperial throne: Theresia's vanity was equal even to that! Be this as it may, she was mightily eager to find out all she could about this amazing divorce, and it was probably her curiosity on this score that impelled her to go and visit Cambacérès, at whose house the author of the "*Mémoires d'une inconnue*" saw her, and thus described the ravages that time had made in her beauty. "There, too," the passage runs, "I saw Madame de Caraman again. The 'Belle Tallien' of former days had grown ungainly, blotched, unrecognisable indeed, although she was not yet forty. The chief penalty that fast women have to pay, the penalty which probably they feel the most is the early withering of their youth, brought about by the life they lead, youth which is precious to all, but absolutely indispensable to them."*

Shortly after the Comtesse de Caraman paid this visit

* "*Les Mémoires d'une inconnue*," p. 3.

to Cambacérès (it was during the winter of 1809) the Comte François de Cabarrus died at Seville (April 27, 1810).^{*} Five weeks later (June 5) Theresia gave birth to a second little Caraman, to wit, Michael Gabriel Alphonse Ferdinand Prince de Chimay.

Our ex-professional beauty was now so thoroughly absorbed in domestic occupations that nowhere do we hear any mention of her. Was she in Paris? Was she in Brussels? We cannot say. She presented the Comte de Caraman with a third child on August 6, 1813; but we now hear so little of her that we do not even know where the event took place. This third child was Marie Louise Stanislas Valerie Thérésia, who died five months later, on January 4, 1814. She was Theresia's tenth child, Theresia herself being now forty-one years of age.

We may legitimately infer that the glorious fortunes of the Empire, which attained their zenith in 1812, had impelled the Caramans to seek an abode elsewhere than in France. If this were the case the invasion would not have encouraged them to return in 1813; but in April of the following year, after the Emperor's abdication, after the first Restoration—during the period, in a word, in which the Comte d'Artois discharged the functions of a Lieutenant-General of the Kingdom on behalf of Louis XVIII—they may have found their way back to Paris.

In a letter to his father, Boucher de Perthes tells a story which appears to relate to this period. It brings

^{*} He was then in the height of favour, and we may reasonably suppose that his fortune—which was enormous in 1785, twenty years earlier, since he gave Theresia a dowry of nearly a million (francs)—had not diminished, but rather increased in the interval. His property would go partly to his widow and partly to Theresia and her brother Theodore Cabarrus of Bordeaux, her other brother having met his death fighting in the French army.

To the wealth of the Caraman-Chimays—which, according to Turquan, was immense—was added that bequeathed to them by François de Cabarrus. It is necessary to bear these facts in mind if we would form a true appreciation of la belle Tallien's stinginess in matters of charity.

out into strong relief the eager curiosity which, in the early days of the Restoration, la belle Tallien still continued to excite among the Parisian crowds.

"She never appears in public," says Boucher de Perthes, "without becoming the cynosure of all eyes, and the people of Paris so frequently allow their eagerness to get the better of their manners that, times without number, I have been sorely put to it to keep my hands off people that came and poked their noses into our very faces. On these occasions—probably because she was so thoroughly accustomed to such situations—she preserved the most remarkable imperturbability, and when some impulsive movement of my arm told her how indignant I felt at such an exhibition of rudeness, she would tighten her hold on me to keep me back.

"One day, however, I saw her genuinely put out. It was at the Louvre. I happened to be making my way through the galleries when I encountered her leaning on the arm of Monsieur de Fontenay, her son by her first husband. On her other arm hung Mademoiselle Tallien, now our cousin, who, in turn, was leading the little de Caraman. The Comtesse thus had with her a child by each of her three husbands. This had probably never struck her when she entered the building, but it struck the people who were there, and a buzz of whispering had quickly arisen. As soon as she saw me she beckoned me to come to her, and relinquishing her hold of Monsieur de Fontenay, put her arm through mine. We took a turn or two through the galleries, and then she begged me to conduct her to her carriage."

This story of Boucher de Perthes possesses more than a merely anecdotal significance. It marks an important stage in the evolution of Theresia. Hitherto we have beheld her putting up with her confinements as accidental and regrettable consequences of her love-affairs, consequences which she lacked either the skill or the power

to avoid. In her relations with Ouvrard she even seems to have exploited her fecundity, in order to knit him the more closely to her. But she never regarded her children as an adornment; she never had them about her to enshrine her charms, save perhaps on one chance occasion when she thought that the presence of little Rose Thermidor would tend to shield her from the disrespectful importunities of some of her foreign guests.

As long as she remained a "fille d'amour" la belle Tallien kept her children out of the way. They emphasised her growing years, and cooled the ardours of those admirers with whom she played for love—and money.

But her ideas had undergone a complete transformation in 1814, when she appeared in public with her little six-year old boy Joseph de Caraman Chimay, her daughter Josephine (or Rose Thermidor), who was nineteen, and Antoine her eldest son, a dashing young officer of twenty-five. This was intended as a public announcement of her determination henceforth to yield herself to no one. Her attitude on this occasion was meant to convey, in the most unmistakable manner possible, her repudiation of her unfortunately ineffaceable past, and her resolution to follow an entirely different line of conduct in the future.

All this however does not imply that she had abandoned the intention of making further conquests, of scoring further triumphs—that would have been over much to ask of a woman compelled by fate to rely solely on that beauty of form and feature with which she was but too generously endowed; a woman whose vanity, fostered by her triumphs in the art of seduction, had become so inordinate as to be barely distinguishable from madness. Old age and death alone would free her from the double thralldom of her egoism and her charms. Morally, therefore, and from her point of view, the visit to the Salon in 1814 was the most laudable action of her whole life. Nevertheless it recoiled upon her disastrously, for the

simple reason that it presented too glaring a contrast with her past behaviour.

Instead of recognising that the beautiful Madame Tallien desired to lay aside the glittering and nebulous apparel of the courtesan for the more modest raiment of the spouse, every one thought that she who, in the days of the Directoire, had unblushingly appeared in public *sans* chemise was now cynically glorying in the licentiousness of her past. Putting this interpretation upon it—and the narrative of Boucher de Perthes leaves no doubt that it was thus the public read the situation—Theresia's flaunting about with her children became a piece of provocative insolence which drew from the crowd the cruellest gibes.

"She was," says Boucher de Perthes, "so very much accustomed to the impertinent curiosity of the populace that she remained at first perfectly unmoved." We can picture her as she pursued her way through the press with a magnificent *sangfroid*, congratulating herself on the marked success of her *mise en scène*. Her aim she thought had been accomplished. What cared she for the look of amazement depicted on every face? What cared she for the disconcerting hum going on around her? People tumbled over one another to catch a glimpse of her; they barred her way, they grouped themselves about her as she walked, they hurried in from adjoining rooms. She might have been the centre of a Revolution! But she merely smiled at it all; she had been through the same sort of thing many a time—at Bordeaux, in the Champs Elysées, at the Tuileries, and at the Luxembourg.

But stay! What were those words that smote her ear? A question perhaps, a quip, an insult made her suddenly start back as though some one had struck her in the face with a riding whip. One can imagine the sort of remark: "The collection is not complete; where are Barras' and Ouvrard's bastards?" Then a sickening

feeling would have come over the unhappy woman. Boucher de Perthes appearing on the scene she called him over to her, left her children, and, clinging to him as a drowning woman might cling to a straw, fled from the room with her young companion, choking down tears of shame and mortification.

CHAPTER VII

Death of Theresia's eldest son—Birth of her last child—Rose Thermidor marries Félix de Narbonne Pelet—Tallien entertained by the Comte de Caraman in the rue de Babylone—The closing years of Tallien ; his tales of want—He receives monetary assistance in the shape of gifts and pensions—His death in the Allée des Veuves—The Comtesse de Caraman cold-shouldered by the Faubourg Saint-Germain—The death of the Chevalier de Fontenay—Theresia adopts the title of Princess—Tallien's *mot*—Theresia in Belgium—Her receptions in Brussels and at Chimay—The Princess's true character is revealed—Her vain efforts to obtain the entrée to the court of the Netherlands—Her repeated applications to the Prince of Orange—The Princesse de Chimay's letters—Her death.

1815-1835

IF the year 1814 was a barren one for Theresia, the year following, on the other hand, was pregnant with important events. Her eldest son, Antoine François Julien Theodore Denis Ignace de Fontenay, died on February 10, 1815, in the Hôtel de Fontenay, 45 rue Saint Louis en l'Île, at the age of twenty-six.

He was a fine handsome young man, a Lieutenant-Colonel in the King's Dragoon Regiment and an officer of the Legion of Honour, and that at a date when this distinction was far from being given away. Theresia would have had good reason to be proud of this son of hers had he lived.

Nine days later the Comtesse de Caraman-Cabarrus gave birth to the fourth child of her third marriage. This was Marie Louise Auguste Thérésia Valentine de Chimay, Theresia's eleventh and last child. She it was who, in later years at Chimay, took down notes from

her mother's dictation of the latter's reminiscences. She married Jean Georges Charles Frédéric Comte—or Marquis—du Hallay-Coetquen, a captain of cavalry.

At the end of the following month (March 20), Napoleon's sudden reappearance on the scene interrupted the Restoration by one hundred days of desperate strife, culminating on June 22, 1815, in the final overthrow of the First Empire on the field of Waterloo.

Amid the cataclysm Theresia calmly married her eldest daughter to the son of the Comtesse de Pelet.*

The exact date of this marriage is unknown, but it must have taken place prior to April 24, for on that day Boucher de Perthes wrote his father saying: "Our cousin, Félix de Narbonne de Pelet, has just married Mademoiselle Thermidor Tallien, Josephine as they now call her, whose mother has become Princesse de Chimay by her marriage with Monsieur de Caraman."

This splendid match was the outcome of yet another case of love at first sight, and it was carried through in opposition to the wishes of the Narbonne Pelets.

Thermidor was a very beautiful girl, and Félix de Narbonne, following de Caraman's example, braved every obstacle in order to make her his own.

"Madame de Chimay," adds Boucher de Perthes, who was a great admirer of Theresia's beauty, "is still beautiful"—she was now forty-two—"and the very embodiment of kindness.

"I used frequently to see her at our cousins' the de Pelets, and it was there that Félix met her daughter, who is very beautiful too, though not so beautiful as her mother. Félix was deeply smitten, but Madame de Pelet, who is connected with the very cream of the Faubourg Saint-Germain set, though willing enough to

* According to Petrus Durel, Theresia, in 1815, made a brief stay near Blois at the Chateau de Menars, which belonged to the Chimays. But he omits to give the date, nor does he indicate the documentary sources from which he obtained his information.

receive Mademoiselle Tallien as a friend, was by no means anxious to have her for a daughter-in-law.

“From the monetary point of view, Félix—who was an officer in some regiment or another, I forget which—was no great catch, while Mademoiselle Tallien was no catch at all.

“The fact is that the ex-dictator of the Gironde and the vanquisher of Robespierre was practically destitute when the Restoration took place, and what is truly remarkable is that, no sooner had Louis XVIII come into his own again, than he bestowed on him a pension of six thousand francs from his privy purse.

“It was out of this pension that Monsieur Tallien provided his daughter with an allowance of one thousand écus per annum, but the King being gone, it was good-bye to the pension and by consequence good-bye to the dowry also.

“The marriage has just taken place. The ceremony was practically a private one. Nevertheless the affair was marked by a somewhat comic incident. Of course Monsieur Tallien, being the bride’s father, was bound to be present, and he thus found himself face to face with his divorced wife. After the ceremony Madame de Chimay offered to drive him back to his house in the Allée des Veuves. He accepted, and took his seat beside her in the carriage. On reaching the Hôtel de Caraman, Madame de Chimay, who was not anxious to go right on to the Champs Elysées, ordered her berlin to stop, and was about to alight when the front door opened and Monsieur de Chimay, who had just then returned home, came forward to take his wife’s hand and encountered—Monsieur Tallien’s instead. It was a trying situation. Still, there was nothing for it but to put the best face on the matter, and, under the impression that Monsieur Tallien was anxious to remain with his daughter till the last, he invited him into the

house. Now, whether Monsieur Tallien was taken aback and failed to realise the situation, or whether he thought it would be discourteous to reject the proffered courtesy, he accepted and went in.

“ The guests sat down to a cold luncheon, but you can judge for yourself whether it was a very lively repast, and whether people raised their eyes from their plates more often than they could help. The Princess appeared to be the least embarrassed of the party, and nobly did the honours of her table, for, not only is she endowed with beauty, but she possesses the very bearing, voice, and manners of a queen.”

Without here falling foul of young Boucher de Perthes' enthusiastic estimate of Theresia—which, after all, merely shows that the Comtesse de Caraman possessed the secret of beguiling him—let us pause for a moment to investigate what he tells us concerning Tallien. His observations, seeing the mystery that envelops this stage of the Terrorist's career, are of considerable importance.

When Tallien regained Paris after being driven out of Spain by the popular rising of 1808, the statement that he was without resources imposes no strain on our credulity, for we know that he had been stripped of all his possessions.

The retiring pension to which he laid claim as an ex-Consul, though eventually granted him, was probably not sanctioned with any great promptitude. Applications, requests in high quarters, official formalities, may easily have occupied several months. We may assume that he had to wait for his pension ten or twelve months at the least, and that during this period the Comtesse de Caraman, afraid of the revelations he had it in his power to disclose concerning her if she withheld her succour, came to his assistance.

When, however, the pension was granted, and began to

come in at regular intervals, the ex-Consul was no longer in necessitous case.

If this pension was suppressed in 1816, Tallien must have been still in receipt of it in 1815, and *a fortiori* in 1814. Boucher de Perthes, however, alleges that he was practically a beggar when the Restoration came about (April 12, 1815).

In order to reconcile these two conflicting statements, both of them plausible enough, we must assume that one of the deeds of the short-lived provisional government which came into being on April 1, 1814, was to put a stop to the payment of Tallien's pension. Such a thing is possible but not probable: governments rarely rush into economies of this nature, particularly where pensions are concerned. On the other hand, Tallien was just the sort of man to cry out before he was hurt. Though his infirmities may have made it impossible for him to indulge his tastes for wine and women, he had, we know, another expensive vice. He was a gambler, and he may have sought, in the violent excitement of the gaming table, to forget those dreams of greatness which had been so cruelly dispelled. But be that as it may, from April 1814, he began to play the starving suppliant; and Louis XVIII, says Boucher de Perthes, came down with a pension of six thousand francs for him out of his privy purse!

Viewed from the Monarch's standpoint this royal largesse was equally politic and clever; but what epithet can one fittingly apply to the man who begged for it, seeing that he had been one of the ringleaders in the murder of Louis XVI. To the very end of his days Tallien remained the abject creature he had always been.

Charles Nauroy, in "Le Curieux," quotes letters to Louis XVIII and the Duc Decazes in which the regicide, in the whining accents of a serving man who has had a drubbing, begs favours of the King and his Minister.

Wherefore, then, should he have refused to receive a home and an annuity from the Comtesse de Caraman when he accepted money and help from all the host of people he was for ever pestering with heartrending recitals of his woes? From 1815 to 1820 he received alms from the King, from the Duc Decazes, from Lacreteille, and from Chancellor Pasquier; while, besides these, Josephine's son Eugene de Beauharnais, the ex-Viceroy of Italy, also made him an allowance.

Now, seeing that Tallien was obtaining funds from all quarters, that he did not collect money merely to look at it, that he left nothing behind him when he died, and, finally, that he always appeared to be penniless, we are forced to assume that he gambled—and kept his gambling dark.

In 1815 his ugly soul came within an ace of taking flight for another world, and, inasmuch as the events of Theresia's career have brought him into our tale, let us anticipate a little and follow him up till he finally quits the stage. It will be but a short digression, and it will serve to rid us for ever of an exceedingly repulsive character.

Upon the story of Tallien's dying in want, of the sale of his books, of the Chancellor Pasquier's meeting him on the quays one day looking for a generous bookseller, and charitably buying from him the last set of his paper *l'Ami du Citoyen*, the biographers have woven many charming passages, but they all contrast too glaringly with the character and deeds of the Terrorist as we know them. Finally, Lenotre, in his brief sketch entitled "La Vieillesse de Tallien," gives us a picture of the ex-member of the Convention ending his days in the Allée des Veuves wistfully lamenting his all too transitory hours of glory and of wealth. Nevertheless he gives us some interesting details concerning the lodging in which death came to him at last. These details he

obtained from an official inventory, and in quoting them it gives us pleasure to express our indebtedness to him for the skill and insight with which he has conducted his investigations.

"He had gathered about him," says Lenotre, "a few relics of bygone days. His bed was hung with great curtains of yellow taffeta; similar curtains draped the windows. On a mahogany cabinet he kept a clock whose bell had chimed the fleeting hours in happier days. Another clock stood upon the mantelpiece beneath a globe of glass, flanked by two porcelain vases adorned with gilded fillets.

"The brief inventory, drawn up in 1820 by the Justice of the Peace of the First Arrondissement, also makes mention of some framed engravings or paintings, trictrac and bouillotte tables, and a cupboard with bookshelves containing a few volumes."

All accounts agree in representing the Terrorist as spending his declining years in absolute retirement. There exists no evidence to the contrary, and, indeed, this ending to the life of such a social pariah was similar to that of many another Conventional; it was an ending that had its *raison d'être* in the Revolution itself. Those shameful products of a social upheaval which is a blot on the fair history of France, could no longer be countenanced or tolerated when the upheaval that brought them into prominence had passed away. Some few of them may perhaps excite our pity, but none our sympathy.

Tallien, according to Lenotre, died on November 16, 1820, at six in the morning, none with him save his old servant Rosalie Martineau.

Thermidor, whose husband was then Secretary-General to the Prefecture of the Orne, did not put in an appearance at the house in the Allée des Veuves until twelve days afterwards, the object of her visit being to take posses-

sion, as sole beneficiary, of her father's little stock of furniture.

The *Journal des Débats* took upon itself to deliver the dead man's *mea culpa*. In its issue of November 17 we read as follows :

" Monsieur Tallien died in Paris this morning. We only recall the fact that he was once a member of the Convention in order that we may at the same time evoke the memory of the glorious Ninth of Thermidor. The infinite service which he then rendered to his country will win him pardon for that regicidal vote, which moreover he has expiated by six-and-twenty years of remorse. Monsieur Tallien has died a poor man, and we can confidently assure our readers that he would have been reduced to a condition of utter penury had it not been for the assistance bestowed upon him by an august and generous hand.

" His obsequies will take place on Friday next, in the Church of Saint-Pierre de Chaillot."

When we bethink ourselves of the man's past ; when we reflect that he had been one of the most infamous creatures of the Revolutionary period ; when we call to mind the hideous massacres of August and September 1792, the butcheries of la Vendée, the martyrdom of the Royal Family, the hecatombs of the Gironde, the murders at Vannes and Auray ; the deportations equally criminal but more cowardly to which he lent himself in the days of the Directoire—if we add to all these crimes, in which he was either ringleader or accomplice, his selfish treachery towards the Republican Government and the wholesale robberies which brought so many families to starvation and death, we cannot but deem that the six-and-twenty years of remorse which the *Journal des Débats* pleads in his favour were as nothing in the balance, and that it is revolting that such a wretch should have been suffered to live on till he was fifty-three, and to die peacefully in

his bed. Moreover, for him to have known twenty-six years of remorse, he must have repented of his crimes in 1794, and we know that he did nothing of the kind. But the obituary notice in the *Journal des Débats*—certainly inspired and possibly written by a member of the King's entourage—evidently conveys a reference to something beyond the events of the Ninth of Thermidor and that something was undoubtedly to the event of the latter end of the year 1794, when Tallien entered into relations with the Royalists with a view to bringing about the re-establishment of the Monarchy. That, in fact, was the sole tangible indication afforded by this caitiff of his remorse—if his attempted treachery is to be disguised beneath so charitable a euphemism.

But in reality this obituary notice is more deadly than any physical punishment that could have been laid upon him. No penalty, no torture, even had it consisted of nameless horrors such as the Chinese inflict on evil doers, could have atoned for the sufferings of the countless victims of the Terrorist. The physical punishment of criminals, the death penalty itself, are so-called acts of Justice, which can only be excused on the grounds that they are intended to deter other possible imitators of their example.

But more thoroughly than the executioner who was sometimes called upon to break, one by one, upon the wheel the limbs of malefactors in the Place de Greve did that official note hold up Tallien to scorn; in it we behold him as Robespierre's assassin, the Parricide of the Revolution and the Republic, begging his bread from the very kin of those he had slain, and finally receiving the prayers of the Church at St. Pierre de Chaillot.

The Hundred Days were succeeded by the second Restoration, and Theresia made a fresh attempt to get into society by holding receptions in the rue de Babylone. They called the house the Hôtel de Chimay; but this

did not avail to obliterate the memory of the fact that she owed it to the generosity of Ouvrard. It was indeed extraordinary that the Comtesse de Caraman did not recognise that this house, with which she had been rewarded as a "light o' love," should have been left as severely alone as the abode in the Allée des Veuves. To her dying day Theresia's heedlessness led her into doing the most incredibly tactless things.

A host of inquisitive nobodies accepted her invitations; but the real, the self-respecting aristocracy refused to be seen in the salon of the ex-Madame Tallien. Still Theresia simply would not take in the situation.

She imagined that the aloofness of her husband's friends was solely due to the religious revival which accompanied the Restoration. It is stated in this connexion that she made unavailing attempts to persuade the Holy See to annul her marriage with Devin de Fontenay, but no references are forthcoming to the authority on which this statement is made. On the other hand, we must not omit to quote a passage from the "*Mémoires d'une Inconnue*," in which her past was held to be the sole cause of her ostracism by the aristocracy.

"A propos of pretty women, here is a very ingenuous observation on the part of a fair one who played a conspicuous rôle in those days, a woman who endeavoured to attain celebrity, and finished, as often happens, by achieving notoriety. The mot in question was delivered to poor Pauline de Chambaye—a former playmate of ours—who was foolish enough to become intimate with her, and afterwards had to give up her acquaintance. She was saying how foolish it was to wear corsets and enumerated their drawbacks, adding that it was not when a woman was dressed that it mattered so much whether she was beautiful or not."

Madame de Caraman-Cabarrus did not reflect that it was only the Cæsars, the great rulers of the world, who

were able to bring pressure on the Church to favour their own whims and interests. Howbeit death came to her aid in this instance, and put an end to the pseudo Marquis de Fontenay, who had never been particularly robust. She thus had the satisfaction of being able to have her civil marriage blessed by the Church without any further delay—only, however, to encounter a fresh disappointment and to learn that not even yet was la belle Tallien of former days sufficiently transformed to be acceptable to the inner social ring.

Villeneuve, in his supplement to the *Biographie Michaud*, narrates that a friend of hers with whom she had discussed the propriety of assuming the title of Princesse de Chimay, bade her do what he knew she was burning to do, and to adopt it without hesitation. Theresia only needed just one person to give her this advice to decide her upon taking the step.

Alas ! styling herself Princess had no better effect than the ecclesiastical marriage, and the miscarriage of this last device gives occasion to the author of “ La Citoyenne Tallien ” to quote the Terrorist’s bitter reply when they brought him word that his former “ Notre Dame de Thermidor ” was dubbing herself Princess : “ It is all very well for her to call herself Princesse *de Chimère*,” said he ; “ but she will be Madame Tallien to the end.”

* * *

After the year 1815, with its long succession of stirring events, Theresia’s career is shrouded in mystery and uncertainty, and our only guides are the references—always brief and often vague—contained in the reminiscences and notes of the Princesse de Chimay’s children.

For twenty years, the last twenty of her life, Theresia shut herself up in the narrow circle of a little group of friends and relations, who evidently considered it neither interesting nor profitable to divulge what they knew of her private life.

As to whether she was faithful to her husband, we may regard it as certain that she did not wander from the path of virtue, that she was true to the Prince, because she had nothing to gain by deceiving him.

Her sensual appetites must have been assuaged by this time, and if she still continued to play the coquette for a few years longer, it was merely from vanity—vanity unalloyed, however, with any ulterior idea of playing her husband false.

Her renown as a beauty was European in extent, and this reputation compelled her to make the most of her charms, to be striking and effective. To do so was, moreover, a duty she owed to her husband. It would therefore be quite erroneous to suspect her of conjugal infidelity because she remained—what she always had been—a coquette! Never having been genuinely in love she was not likely to have experienced the fervour of a real passion at an age when the heart ceases to expand and when the selfishness of selfish people becomes more accentuated than ever. But it was, above all, the ineradicable hope which she retained until her life's end, the hope of penetrating into the inner social ring, that was of itself enough to preserve her from any moral delinquencies.

As the Faubourg Saint-Germain remained inexorably aloof, she turned towards the Court of the Low Countries, where the Prince de Chimay was shortly afterwards appointed Chamberlain to the King.

Alternately at Brussels and at Chimay we see her endeavouring by hook or by crook to attract friends to her cause, and to gain support in her attempts to conciliate the Royal favour.

Had not the vanity with which she was cursed obscured her good sense she might have been happy, for she commanded all that was necessary to ensure her welfare. She was beloved by her husband; she was immensely

rich. In the summertime at Chimay there would come a long succession of guests to pay their respects to His Majesty's Chamberlain, and they did not omit to render homage to the Princess. In the winter her salons in Brussels would be similarly thronged. Though we have expressed ourselves as sceptical regarding her stories concerning the exalted people she knew before the Consulate, we have no sufficient reason to suspect her of romancing when she enumerates the names of the various people with whom she was on friendly terms in Belgium.

The Prince de Chimay, Royal Chamberlain and member of the Upper House of the States General, was a high official to whom all would naturally seek to present themselves. Moreover, the Princess's visitors were to a large extent artistic people, independent beings, *enfants gâtés* of Society to whom Society was more indulgent than it was to itself. Among her guests "Notre Dame de Chimay" counted Auber, Cherubini, Rode, Osborne, Baillot, composers or violinists with whom the Prince de Chimay discussed musical matters, graciously affecting to pride himself on having been one of their confrères when the Revolutionary troubles had compelled him to earn his livelihood by teaching the violin in Hamburg.

Népomucène Lemer cier and la Malibran are among those to whose names reference is made; and to these we must add that of the Comtesse de Marlin, eager to air her Spanish by conversing with the "Comtesse" de Cabarrus.

The Princesse de Chimay—for we must not be niggardly in referring to her by a title which sang so musically in her dainty ears—remembering how she had once played the Muse in all the arts, plied her brush under the indulgent supervision of the Master. But she had laid aside the harp, the guitar, and the mandoline, and her lovely fingers strayed no more over the ivory keys of the harp-



MADAME TALLIEN
from a portrait by Gérard in the Musée Carnavalet

sichord. She had the wisdom not to risk disastrous comparisons with the Maestros whom she entertained. But for this she made amends in recitation, and particularly in comedy, in which she displayed no inconsiderable talent.

There was a little theatre at Chimay where she took part in plays which she superintended herself and where she revealed—though unintentionally—to one of her lady admirers that she was a comedienne first and foremost, and a marquise, high-flying courtesan, princess, or what you will a very long way afterwards. They quote *à propos* of these displays of the histrionic art, the opinion of a Society woman who was very closely acquainted with Theresia at Chimay, and who has given us in the following word-picture of her, a sort of supplement to Gerard's painting :

"Madame de Chimay," she says, "well knew the charm of the lingering glance, the irresistible power of a smile. She was thoroughly acquainted with the secret of imparting to her countenance whatsoever expression she desired. Nature had not given her a gracious look or endowed her with a pleasant smile (Garat would have detected a certain amount of artifice in it, Talma would have noticed pose). Her Spanish eyes, dark and vivacious as they were, were not always gentle, when you could look at them without her being aware that she was observed. Her lips, slightly sardonic despite their voluptuous curves, formed a mouth that was a little disdainful; a mouth which, beautiful though it was, might have belonged to a Fury just as appropriately as to a Venus.

"Many an evening hour have I spent with the Princesse de Chimay, at her house or at mine, listening to the narratives she had to tell me of the various episodes in her career. She could tell a story with feeling and spirit. It was better than listening to a first-rate novel

read by a good reader. Not only was there plenty of poetry, plenty of dramatic style and gesture—and she could add the effect of tears when she would—in her narrations, but the stories themselves were full of dramatic and poetic interest, of enthralling situations, of strange or terrible events.

“I used to drink it all in with the eagerness natural to one whose heart was young and impressionable. I recognised that she had loved much and suffered much, and I could not understand why the world should display such harshness towards a woman who had been a political heroine in her time.”

Without allowing ourselves to be influenced by any temptation to show indulgence towards *la belle Tallien* because of her beauty, we have animadverted with rigour upon whatsoever in her conduct called for censure, urged thereto by the thoughts of her guilty participation in the craven or criminal deeds of the Revolutionaries ; but nothing in any of the strictures we have felt compelled to pass on her approaches the remorselessness of this subtle analysis of her character.

What, if we read between the lines, does this sketch of Madame Tallien in reality amount to? Just this: “Madame Tallien is an adept in the seductive arts. She can play the lover with wonderful skill ; but she is not a woman with any genuine love in her composition. Her gentleness is pretence ; she has no real kindness of heart. In her, all is artifice, all is pose. Catch her unawares, and there is a spiteful look in her eyes. She is jealous, self-sufficient, and equally ready to rend or to cringe, to show her fangs or to fawn and fondle. She can lie with a rare perfection when it is a question of eulogising her own achievements. She is a woman with whom one cannot deal too cautiously.”

Such, baldly but accurately interpreted, is what “the Society woman who knew the Princess well” really

stated. Nor can we urge that the language employed is unwarrantably harsh. The inflexible opposition with which her social ambitions were met never brought any thoughts of contrition to her mind. Never for a moment did she tell herself that she might have been to blame for the boycott to which she was subjected, and that for her husband's peace of mind and for her children's dignity, as well as for her own, it was her duty to renounce this vain ambition so productive of rebuffs that only served to augment her confusion. But no—tenacious, obstinate, and self-willed, she kept telling herself that the world was unjust, that she was the victim of jealous hatred, and that in the end she would triumph over all her foes, never seeing that her ambition, her own reckless and indomitable vanity only helped to strengthen the opposition against her. Was it thus she displayed her kindly disposition, by making everything subservient to her personal vanity? Her husband, who loved her, and her children necessarily suffered from the restlessness that tormented her and brought on the complaint that was destined to bring her to the grave long before her time, for, so far as physique was concerned, she might have lived to ninety.

In the presence of strangers she affected a gentleness; an air of resignation and forgiveness, which she clumsily belied by her very obvious eagerness to avail herself of even the flimsiest chances of getting into the good graces of King William. Of this we shall shortly give an example. Now all this affectation of gentleness and resignation proves, by the very fact of its being affectation; that she maintained no such reserve when her only witnesses were her husband and her children. Before them she made no secret of her disappointments and her mortifications, and this would not have tended to render her a very pleasant companion.

It is practically certain that a woman like this, into

whose nature true affection did not enter, who was so thoroughly the slave of her own selfishness, would sooner or later have quarrelled with her husband on account of the Royal favour he enjoyed but of which he could not succeed in making her a participant. Such scenes are too invariable a concomitant of false positions of this nature to permit us to suppose that the Prince de Chimay enjoyed any exceptional immunity.

How significant are the terms in which the Princess's mortifications are described :

"He (the Prince) went to the Court alone. This drove the Princess to desperation.

"She suffered most cruelly by reason of this unthinkable disfavour, these ludicrous reproofs. Every day, nay, every moment of her life, was a torture to her. She seemed as though she were enveloped in a sort of Dejanaira's robe of which she—beautiful and imperious creature—vainly strove to divest herself."

In this picture we are shown the rebellious fits, the outbreaks of wrath, the ceaseless suffering of which Theresia's inner life in reality consisted, and which made her home a purgatory, although in the presence of strangers she affected the heavenly resignation of a beautiful but injured soul.

She would fain have moved heaven and earth to rid herself of this grief, this haunting incubus.

She employed every imaginable stratagem to overthrow the terrible pillars of Gaza that constituted King William's Court.

Such, then, was her "resignation." Touching her wilful blindness to her own faults, it is conspicuously evidenced in the following complaint :

"The women of this Court, towards which she looked so longingly, were among her bitterest foes. One would have said that they were jealous of Madame Tallien's past. They plotted against Madame Tallien in order

to strike the more effectually at the Princesse de Chimay. They were clouds which feared the coming of a star."

There the foolish obstinacy of Theresia is glaringly revealed. To get a clear idea of the gentleness and resignation she affected, but which she belied by beseeching people to plead her cause on every possible occasion, we need only listen to the statement by a woman who, though in her confidence, failed to perceive how her rôle of the meek victim was stultified by the bitter tenacity with which she clung to her unconquerable hopes.

"I always found the Princesse de Chimay ready to excuse and defend the very people of whose treatment she had most reason to complain. Never did she deliver herself of an ill-natured retort. She suffered tortures from their ruthless determination to humiliate her, but whenever she had occasion to refer to them she spoke without bitterness, with the gentleness of an angel and the grave resignation of one altogether above their petty machinations. I used to show much more indignation than she at the rebuffs with which they overwhelmed her. She, seeing the interest her position awoke in me, endeavoured to turn my devotion to her to some service with a view to obtaining a boon which she had no longer any grounds to hope for, namely, her admission to the Court of the Netherlands. The flattering and distinguished manner in which I was received there, the exceptional kindness and affection with which I was honoured by the excellent Queen and the Prince and Princess of Orange, inspired the unhappy exile with the certainty of triumphing by my influence. She eagerly besought me to plead on her behalf with the Queen, and particularly the Prince of Orange, whom she knew to be very well disposed towards her. Although this step laid a great strain on my excessive shyness I never hesitated; nay, more, I renewed my petitions several

times. The Prince took my obstinate persecution of him in very good part, and, while always complimenting me on the eloquence of what he called my 'Counsel's speeches,' never failed to wind up the discussion by saying: 'Mon Dieu, dear lady, nothing would please me better than to grant your request. The Princesse de Chimay, who has in you the best advocate in the world, is a charming woman, a most distinguished woman; but I cannot have her at my house. My wife would not agree to it and you must recognise that she could not, since the King will not hear of her being received at Court.' "

Lastly, it appears that Theresia herself wrote numerous letters to the Prince of Orange to prevail on him to persuade his father to yield.

We need not inquire whether the de Chimay family have destroyed these letters!

* * *

When we have read the earliest epistles which may with certainty be ascribed to Theresia herself, namely, the letter sent in 1791 to the *Journal de la Cour et de la Ville*, which had reproached her for being the mistress of all the habitués of the Hôtel Fontenay, the letter which, in her character of Notre Dame de Thermidor, she wrote to Constance Lavaud, her Bordeaux friend, on August 18, 1794, and lastly the note drafted for Citoyen Dufour, her man of law, in 1797, we have a pretty clear notion of her style, her range of ideas, and her epistolary capabilities, and one wonders how she could have composed the numerous letters which she addressed to the Prince of Orange with the view of enlisting his advocacy on her behalf with King William. From 1794 to 1805 it is clear she had neither the leisure nor the inclination to furbish up her education. It may have been after she became Comtesse de Caraman that she had recourse to tutors to put her right in matters of spelling, grammar,

and style ; but the hypothesis is not easily reconcilable with her conceit and her intellectual apathy. Even supposing that she practised the art of correct writing during the years 1805 to 1819 her studies apparently had no effect on her range of ideas ; that was the same in 1835; the year of her death, as it had been in 1820, 1805 and 1789.

We learn what the nature of her correspondence with the Prince of Orange must have been from a series of letters which she addressed in 1819, 1820, 1825, 1826, and 1831 to Monsieur de Pougens. Neither Theresia Cabarrus nor Madame de Fontenay, neither Madame Tallien nor Madame de Caraman enters into these letters to Monsieur de Pougens, nothing but a sort of abstract egoism, the principle or essence so to speak of the signatory. In brief, if we weigh them well, if we subject them to analysis, it becomes evident that these letters to Monsieur de Pougens were not the composition of the Princesse de Chimay. They were written to her order. To some zealous and confidential secretary she doubtless said : " I wish to say so-and-so to Monsieur de Pougens, put it in a letter " ; or " Draft something for me to write and I will put it into shape." But who was the secretary in this case ? Was it her husband, or her children's tutor, or a friend—the Monsieur Moyne, for example, whom she mentions in one of the letters in question. Whoever wrote the letters, it was not Theresia. She merely copied out, more or less word for word, what she had asked to be drafted.

Occasionally she would merely mention to her assistant the object of the missive. For example, she would say : " I want to write to Monsieur Pougens thanking him for the books he sent me. Sketch out something in very flattering terms. Writers are the sort of people one has to make a lot of. Tell him that I read his work over and over again, and never grow tired of it."

On so general a theme as that the Princess's secretary was able to give his eloquence full rein. He composed a letter as though for himself; and it is abundantly clear that one hand wrote it and another signed it. This is the case with the letter dated April 7, 1820, which we shall quote a little later.

Even had her education not been at fault, what woman when writing to an author would fail to have recourse to some other man of letters to dictate a letter for her or to correct her faults?

It was only in the 17th and 18th centuries that women of fashion were to be found familiar enough with literature, and sufficiently superior socially to contemporary men of letters, to write to the professed litterateurs of their day epistles which, delicate, witty, and well turned as they often were, were not invariably free from the clumsiest imperfections.

What writer, moreover, has not received letters from a fair correspondent moulded in such a literary form as to make him suspect that the lady had benefited by the collaboration of a confrère?

We may take it that in inditing epistles to a man of letters like Monsieur de Pougens, the Princesse de Chimay—whose vanity would have kindled the desire to create a triumphant impression—asked some one or other to write her what she was pleased to call a rough draft, which she merely copied word for word and signed. And if she required aid here, she must have been in still greater need of assistance when she came to address her long series of letters to the Prince of Orange upon a subject of such vital importance to herself.

These diverse considerations render us more than sceptical regarding the real authorship of the specimens of the epistolary art which have come down to us over the Princess's signature, and a careful examination of

them makes it abundantly clear that they are not Theresia's own composition.

The first of them opens on a note of badinage in which the Princess playfully accuses herself of certain faults, faults which she really possessed, but of which she hoped to be acquitted by thus making an open but bantering allusion to them. This mode of "playing with fire" is a subterfuge commonly employed by coquettes, but only in respect of blemishes other than personal. A woman, for example, would never avow that she was thin, if thinness were really one of her defects; but she would have no compunction in confessing that she was spiteful, hot-tempered and jealous. To only two moral delinquencies would she be loath to plead guilty—vanity and deceit. The letter, dated Chimay, July 8, 1819, reads as follows :

"I am afraid that, out of regard for the kindly illusions you entertain concerning me, Monsieur Moyne has not told you in his letter into what a passion I flew when I saw you paying more attention to my daughter than to me. Now, I want you to love me with all my faults, and not as you conjure me up in your imagination. Know then that I am a jealous, envious, and hot-tempered creature, and that consequently I looked with anything but favour on your attention to my daughter, in spite of the depth of my maternal affection for her. Take heed, therefore, and betray no more predilections. Time treats me ill enough without your ranging yourself on his side."

The whole of this exordium, by its very lack of perspicuity, seems to point to its being a draft of the Princess's to which her secretary had endeavoured, with qualified success, to impart lucidity and a tone of gallantry.

The remainder of the letter, being less personal in character, runs more flowingly :

“ Now, mon ami, I have to tell you that you must rescue from despair and from death a most worthy man, a scholar, a distinguished servant of his country and a thorough master of several languages. He is a friend of Monsieur Moyne, and he is well qualified to fill any post that may be offered him, whether as assistant to a literary man, translator, amanuensis, school teacher, or private tutor. His sole ambition is to win his daily bread, and by industrious labour to acquire the means of paying back certain friends who had put down a sum of money as a guarantee for him, which sum of money was taken away from him by the Chief of the Department in which he was engaged. The amount involved is eight hundred francs.

“ His ambitions, you see, are not unlimited. He desires to earn a living, but he must earn it without the loss of his self-respect, for he is a man of high ideas. He would have done away with himself—so he wrote to Monsieur Moyne—had it not been for certain obligations that he felt bound in honour to fulfil. I am the victim of some fresh machinations here, and my hands are tied. I can do nothing. I cannot even go to look after my daughter, who is expecting her fourth child. It therefore means, mon ami; that through you or some of your many friends Monsieur Bourdeau must be saved from starvation and death. Send me letters for him for all the influential people in the University, all the big-wigs of the Institute. Anyhow, manage to get him employment somewhere; my gratitude, I assure you, will be no less profound than his. I have only seen him twice, although he taught my children writing; but his letters are the letters of a man of distinction, a man endowed with great and noble qualities, and it grieves me not to be able to save him from despair. I rely on you.

“ Remember me, please, to Madame de Pougens and to her amiable companion, and be assured, my excellent

friend, that my affection for you will terminate only with my life."

Without now pausing to reflect on the striking contrast which the literary flavour of this letter affords with all that we have previously learned concerning her, we cannot help remarking on what, to say the least of it, is the singular nature of Theresia's request.

How did it happen, one naturally asks, that Madame Tallien, who kept up a great establishment at Brussels, and had a chateau at Chimay, who had all her gowns sent her by the most fashionable dressmaking houses in Paris, and who invariably gave evidence of being possessed of immense wealth, had not a paltry eight hundred francs to give the luckless Monsieur Bourdeau, her children's writing-master? The thing is preposterous.

Even if her daughter had wanted notes to the tune of ten or twelve thousand francs, her husband's wealth was so vast that we can hardly imagine her refusing the request; and then not to have a mere eight hundred francs for Bourdeau, which she could have given him in instalments of a hundred or fifty at a time—it is, frankly, beyond us.

The truth of the matter is that Theresia was particularly close-fisted with her own money. She would play the Lady Bountiful in public subscriptions and collections with other people's money; but where she, individually, was concerned it was a different matter. In the days when Ouvrard was lavishing money on her as though she were a queen; she sold a harp that belonged to her sooner than make some one else a present of it. As it had been in 1794, so it was in 1819. She would glance with cold indifference on a poor devil dying of hunger as she drove past in her magnificent equipage, with never a thought of tossing him a few miserable assignats, though she would fling hundred-louis notes

by the handful on to a gaming table and think nothing of it.

The following letter is one of those to which we have alluded as being composed entirely by her "secretary." It would be impossible to find anything more completely out of harmony with Theresia's ordinary ideas.

"April 7, 1820.

"You have made me a rich woman, my excellent friend, by presenting me with your works; and yet I am not going to thank you. Like so many other folk I intend to show my ingratitude, and not being able to repudiate the benefit I am going to reproach you for conferring it. It is true that your books which, owing to their irresistible appeal, I have been unable to cease reading, have so thoroughly engrossed my attention and distracted my thoughts, not only from my troubles but from my occupations also, that I have been conscious of nothing but the characters which your melancholy yet ardent imagination has so skilfully brought into being. 'If you have worries,' I tell my friends, 'go and read Monsieur de Pougens' latest books; you will forget your cares, and as for your business—well, that will prosper as God wills.' Such has been my experience. To get my revenge on you I determined to read the books again, because I thought I should find some little blemishes and be able to temper my praise with a little fault-finding; but my heart was more deeply stirred, and my tears flowed more copiously than ever. It was too much of a good thing! For this reason I quickly sent your books off to the binder, for I might have had to read them through again, and the whole house might have been turned upside down without my noticing it. Make haste and produce something that will not be so provocative of tears, for I have plenty to weep for in my own life.

"All my circle send countless greetings to you and to Madame de Pougens, and I, who have loved you now for fifteen years, can only assure you that my affection will never falter.

"C. PSSE. DE CHIMAY."

Four years later Monsieur de Lacretelle published his History of France. In it mention was made of the Princess in connexion with the Ninth of Thermidor, and behold her dashing off a letter to her friend the Chevalier de Pougens, Member of the Institute, who lived in the rue des Saints-Pères in Paris. It is a letter which shows off to perfection the imperturbable aplomb with which she would lie, when it was a case of vaunting her own achievements.

"Brussels, *November 16, 1824.*

"I am unaware, mon ami, whether you are acquainted with Monsieur de Lacretelle otherwise than through his History of France; but if you are on friendly terms with him, please tell him how grateful I am for the kind manner in which he has referred to me in his eleventh volume.

"I should of course have been glad if he had mentioned the letter I sent on the 7th Thermidor to Monsieur Tallien, and the anniversary banquet of the 9th, when I gathered round me the prominent and advanced adherents of all the conflicting parties. Perceiving from the sort of toasts that were being proposed that my guests would soon be hurling the plates at one another's heads, I rose and restored calm to the turbulent assembly by serenely proposing that every one should drink to the fulfilment of the following wish: 'Let all past mistakes be forgotten, all wrongs forgiven, and all Frenchmen be brothers again!' Threats were succeeded by applause; and all appeared to sink their differences so completely that they rose and with one accord drank long life to Notre Dame de Thermidor.

“ It was also at my behest that the young folk who used to visit me obliterated, all along the rue St. George’s where I lived, the senseless and truculent inscription ‘ Equality, Fraternity, the Republic or Death.’

“ It was I, too, who went to the rue Saint Honoré with Fréron and De Merlin to remove the keys from the door of the Jacobin Club. This prevented them from holding their meeting that day, and gave their opponents time to prepare their final overthrow before they could concert any measures to counter the blow.

“ I am also deeply regretful that no allusion has been made to an incident which won Monsieur Tallien some true friends. This is what happened. It was in Fructidor. The Assembly had just risen, and several Deputies and other public men had been sentenced to deportation. Monsieur Tallien found many of them at our house when he returned home, and as he entered the room he exclaimed, ‘ Here I am no longer a Representative of the People, and I only see before me friends who are the victims of political opinion.’ He then said he would do anything in his power for them, and offered them a safe asylum and money without stint. Monsieur de Villaret-Joyeuse is still alive, and can bear out the truth of what I say.

“ I am of course perfectly aware that an historian cannot go out of his way to enter into every little detail that may be calculated to redound to the credit of any particular family, but Monsieur de Lacretelle has been so very hard on poor Monsieur Tallien that one would have expected him to endeavour to soften the effect of his strictures by calling to mind his worthy deeds.

“ You must excuse me, my friend, if I have allowed myself to dwell on these reminiscences of mine, for I intended, I assure you, only to ask you to tell Monsieur de Lacretelle how deeply grateful I am to him. But it cannot be helped. When one has to endure the ill-

natured treatment that has fallen to my lot, one lives only in the recollections of the past in order to soften the stings of the present.

“ Adieu, forgive me, and embrace Madame de Pougens for me.”

If we compare the style of this letter, with all its misleading and untruthful claims, with that of the letter previously quoted, we have ample proof that the two letters are the handiwork of different people.

Next year, at Brussels, the Princess learned that the *Biographie des Contemporaires*, which had not canonised her as she would have wished, was about to publish its “ R ” section in which Riquet de Caraman would almost certainly be severely pilloried on account of his notorious alliance with la belle Tallien. How dreadful, and how fatal to her chances of securing an invitation to King William’s Court !

A notice was therefore put together with the utmost speed, and sent with the letter. This was the notice that at all costs must go into the *Biographie des Contemporaires*—this and none other. For, gracious heavens ! suppose they were to put it on record that King William would not admit her to his Court !

“ I am now going, my friend, to ask of you a service, to the performance of which I beseech you to bring all the warmth, all the ardour of your nature, for the matter is urgent.

“ The authors of the *Biographie des Contemporaires* are at the letter R, and I should like to prevail on them to insert the accompanying notice regarding Monsieur de Chimay, whom they are apparently not disposed to treat very favourably, though assuredly his views, the generous use to which he has devoted his fortune in Chimay, where the people adore him, and his domestic virtues, give him a title second to none to the esteem and regard of the public. Cut down the notice as much as you please, but

beg these gentlemen in my name to insert the gist of it. Relying on the former friendship of Messieurs Arnault and Norwins—who used to be frequent visitors at my house—as well as on the indulgence of the editors, I should have thought it an insult to ask them to deal kindly with me, though I might have expected that, like true knights of France, they would have avenged the calumnies that had been heaped upon me in other biographies. Alas ! I was deceived. May they at least be more just towards my husband who can have committed no crime in their eyes save the crime of having made me his wife.

“ Adieu, my friend ; act promptly I beg of you and tell them that the gratitude I shall owe them will efface the memory that they once treated me as an enemy.

“ Adieu ; excuse this scrawl, which is worse than last week’s.

“ All good wishes and affectionate greetings to Madame de Pougens and yourself.

“ C. PSSE. DE CHIMAY.”

There are two other letters, one of March 28, 1826, and the other of December 30, 1831, which differ but little from the foregoing so far as form is concerned.

Whoever the Princess’s editor may have been—her husband, her husband’s secretary, Monsieur Moyne, a private secretary of her own, or even a reader—it is quite within the range of possibility that from 1819 to 1830 or 1835, he gave Theresia the benefit of his assistance. There is not, therefore, in the continuance of this high level of style—so difficult to associate with la belle Tallien—any reason for regarding it as really her own.

It will be noticed that in the letter of March 28, 1826, Madame de Chimay advances an excuse for not undertaking to have Monsieur de Pougens’ works forwarded to the Princess of Orange. Peradventure the Prince had

grown weary of her importunate applications for admission to the Court !

A propos of the memoirs of Madame de Genlis, Theresia gives some slight indication of the ravages which disappointment and exile had wrought upon her health. She makes us feel that she was already beginning to be conscious of that hepatic trouble which was aggravated by the repeated mortifications she had to endure.

“ I cannot thank you enough,” she writes from Brussels on March 28, 1826 ; “ I cannot thank you enough, my dear Chevalier, for remembering me so kindly, and for having entrusted me with something to do on your behalf. This mark of confidence has touched me deeply, and I will endeavour to show that I am not undeserving of it.

“ I have already let an enlightened friend of mine have one of the notices you sent me ; but I should like to have others to send to England, Sweden, and Russia, if I cannot manage the whole thing here without a loss.

“ I am of opinion that it would be advisable for you to write in full confidence to the King of Sweden. You could send me your missive, and I would add to it a very pressing letter to the King, and another to the Queen who has ever been more than kind to me.

“ The present moment is not a particularly favourable one for placing the works here. The Prince of Orange is in Russia ; the Princess, overwhelmed with the deepest grief, is inaccessible. However, she is fond of literature ; she has an enlightened mind ; she works for five or six hours a day making excerpts from works of the most abstract nature. It might perhaps be as well for you to write her direct—a mark of confidence from a man of your intellectual eminence would flatter her, and be more productive of result than all the recommendations of the Court people.

“ I have not read any of the books in which you state that favourable reference is made to me, excepting the

Memoirs of Madame de Genlis, which have awakened in me feelings of the liveliest gratitude. But, my friend, there are wounds of which we can allay the smart but never efface the scar. The attacks of my calumniators had widespread effects, disastrous consequences, before my defence, which appeals to and engages the attention of right-minded folk alone, could have any extenuating effect on the general mass of people. Do not, however, imagine that these melancholy reflections, these unkind truths, diminish the heartfelt gratitude which I feel towards those who have generously undertaken to defend my name. Quite the contrary is the case, and as I cannot see that they have any interest now in championing my cause, I look on them as real friends and benefactors.

"Monsieur de Chimay, my children, and Monsieur Moyne, touched by your kind recollection of them, join me in thanks to you and in kindest regards to Madame de Pougens."

Then follows a passage in "English" :

"For my part I hope she will receive the sincere assurance of my greatest tenderness, and you also.

"I am, for ever yours (*sic*) *

"PCESE. DE CHIMAY."

Shortly after the despatch of this letter the Princess was taken suddenly and seriously ill, for, when Monsieur Pougens wrote to thank her for it, she was unable to send him a reply.

What was the nature of the illness? Theresia herself supplies no particulars. It may have been simply a chance ailment—chill or fever—but it is equally possible that the shock consequent upon the publication of the

* Theresia's vanity is again displayed in this termination to her letter. The Princesse de Chimay was not a mistress of English—this passage is some evidence of that—but, owing to her unconquerable vanity, the desire to create an impression, no matter how, was as irresistible to her as a sneeze.

Sénart memoirs was not unconnected with it, for when at length, on June 18, 1826, she was able to resume her correspondence with the kindly academician she alludes to that work in terms of extreme bitterness.

"I was at death's door," she writes, "when your first letter came, and even now, as I write this in answer to your second, I have barely set out on the road to recovery. But how was I to resist thanking you for keeping me so constantly in your thoughts? It brings the deepest consolation to my heart. I am disobeying the doctors' orders—for they say I mustn't write—in sending you this letter. But are you not the best of physicians for this heart of mine that, suffering so cruelly for all these years, has sustained a fresh outrage in the diabolical calumnies of a wretch named Sénart who, when overtaken by death, passed on his nefarious task to a blacker villain called Dumesnil. The latter—actuated solely by greed for gold—has not hesitated to dishonour the dead by sullyng the memory of the man who, on the glorious Ninth of Thermidor, proved himself the saviour of his country. Ah! my friend, how am I to go on living a life into which such poison has been distilled? You cannot tell me; you, whom I have seen so distressed for far less serious reasons. Do not therefore essay to employ the charm of your eloquence to bring solace to my heart, or seek to temper the bitterness of these hideous trials. Do but tell me that you love me—you and Madame de Pougens. Whisper the words never so softly, these words of consolation, and surely I shall hear them. Alas! I am in the wilderness, and long since I have heard but the howling of beasts of prey. Your voice will be as the voice of the Saviour.

"The physicians who have prolonged my life—or rather, my agony—have stated that it would be fatal for me to go anywhere to take the waters. I am therefore settling down at Chimay to follow a strict régime from

which my husband and children, who know nothing as yet of this latest attack upon me, expect great results.

"Write to me at Chimay par Mons (Pays-Bas), and send me the work of which you speak, and which, like the others, will doubtless enable me to forget for a time the ills which afflict me in body and soul.

"Adieu, my friend, I have tired myself out over this scrawl. Tallien's daughter, the one whose name was given as Thermidor in her birth certificate, and who is now Madame de Narbonne Pelet and the mother of five children, what pain must have been hers. Ah! my heart is rent. What harm have I ever done to this Sénart, this Dumesnil? Forgive this long lament. You are my friend.

"T. C.

"PRINCESSE DE CHIMAY." *

We see from the despairing tone of this letter what a profound effect the attacks on her past life exercised on the Princesse de Chimay. The acuteness of her sufferings would have inclined our hearts to pity had she but frankly and freely confessed that she repented of the wrongs she had committed, wrongs which she had aggravated in thrusting herself, as it were by trickery, into an honoured and worthy family. But her incorrigible vanity, her disingenuousness, her chronic deceitfulness, destroy our compassion by reminding us that her trials were merited, and that the principal part of her troubles was caused by the non-fulfilment of her own unlawful aims.

Instead of making a frank avowal of her sins, she merely displayed her detestation of those who insisted on dragging her past athwart the path of her overweening ambition.

* Petrus Durel, "Mme. Tallien," pp. 89-90.

Sénart, in her eyes, was but a wretch ; Dumesnil just as bad.

She spoke of the effect of it all upon her children, seemingly unaware that she thereby drew attention to the derelictions of which she had so long been guilty as a mother. She brought in Tallien's name, calling him the Liberator of France, well knowing that the whole thing was legend from beginning to end.

The same year, four months later, in a letter to Monsieur de Pougens, she returned once more to her everlasting theme—her blighted life, to her past, which was thrown in her face whenever she essayed to force her way into Society's charmed circle.

This letter—we quote it below—reveals that she was keenly tempted to write her memoirs, but that she relinquished the task not only because she was too indolent to carry it through, but also—as she was later to confess—because it was a story which her husband would not permit her to relate.

“ Brussels, *October 25, 1826.*

“ Yes, my friend, by all means write your memoirs ; bring out the truth ; let in the daylight. But as for the suggestion that I should write mine—that I should put myself in the ridiculous posture of those women-scribblers who were not even in France when the events they pretend to describe took place, but who claim to have been eye-witnesses of everything—no, not I, *mon ami !* Besides, it would be useless for me to water down the truth. Even if I did, every one would accuse me of romancing. Yet indeed, what a romance my life has been. I even grow incredulous about it myself sometimes. There are times when, looking back over the past, it seems to me that I must be witnessing a play, just as that night when I saw placarded up outside a theatre on the Boulevards the announcement : ‘ Monsieur de

Robespierre at the Citoyenne Tallien's.' When I was lying on mouldy straw in a prison cell with but twenty-four hours between me and the scaffold, we, too—my companions and I—thought we must be dreaming, so blind did our youthfulness render us to the horrors of the morrow. The following day was the Ninth of Thermidor, the most splendid day of my life, since it was to some degree to this little hand of mine that the casting down of the guillotine was due. Let us not repeat that frightful word. I dare not cast a glance behind me, for all the slanders that are heaped upon me arise from the political passions of the Revolution. When you are driving through a stormy sea, you are not always able to choose the spar to which you cling for safety. Moreover, one may look back with pride and glory on some of the wrongs one has had to endure. If I stooped to defend myself, I should say to you: 'Is it my fault that Monsieur de Fontenay betrayed and deserted me, that Monsieur Tallien betook himself to Egypt when he ought to have remained in Paris?' But all this you know better than I. Write me, and embrace Madame de Pougens for me.

“ She who was once

“ NOTRE DAME DE THERMIDOR.” *

We may wonder how Theresia could dare to say that Monsieur de Fontenay had abandoned her when their divorce was officially settled on a basis of mutual agreement. How could she have accused Tallien of going off to Egypt instead of staying in Paris, when her scandalous behaviour with Barras was at least one of the motives of his departure?—that and the fact that with Theresia's assistance he had run through most of the proceeds of his pillage.

However, in a letter written in 1829—that is to say,

* Petrus Durel, pp. 71-72.

three years later—to her son Dr. Cabarrus, we see her in a slightly more satisfactory frame of mind.

After the manner of those stains which we endeavour to remove with copious benzine, but which reappear in time larger than ever, Theresia's past was ever rising up to confront and confound the Princesse de Chimay.

“ I thank you from the bottom of my heart, mon ami, for having prevented the threatened publication of those memoirs. When a man has sunk to such depths of baseness and cowardice as to make capital by attacking a woman and a mother, his heart must be inaccessible to all feeling, and the victim has no alternative but resignation. Never think, my friend, that you will be able to persuade me to do this thing because, as the saying goes, there is money in it. Not only have I not written my memoirs, but I never intend to do so. I should be unwilling to work anyone the ills that have been done to me ; and letters, written in days long ago, if published now would bring me all too cruel a revenge. Until to-day I have never caused a tear to fall, I have never been conscious of a feeling of hatred or of a desire for vengeance. And as I have lived, so also would I die. I scorn those who batten upon calumny, and I pity those who beguile their time with tasks designed to bring despair and oftentimes disruption into families which, but for their slanders, would have lived together in happiness. I have not read ‘Fragoletta,’ and I only read memoirs when I am assured that my contemporaries are not unjustly treated in them. As to the Memoirs with whose publication I am menaced, no one will suppose that, enjoying as I do the love and esteem of the people here and holding an honourable position, I should wish to go out of my way to disturb the tranquillity of my home by setting tongues wagging about me. I owe it to Monsieur de Chimay to endure all slanders uncom-

plainingly, and, whatever be the nature of the attacks upon me, those who make them will but earn my contempt and the contempt of all right-thinking people."

This letter, despite the formal character of its denials, seems to indicate pretty clearly that Theresia had once harboured the intention of committing the story of her life to writing, with the assistance of some obsequious litterateur or scribe, glossing it over as she did the stories she told by word of mouth, in order to show herself off to the best advantage.

Though her family may not have been able to stop her tongue,* they at all events took good care to keep her from putting anything on paper. It was not on her own or on her children's account that she relinquished the idea of penning her memoirs: it was because the Comte de Caraman had interposed his formal veto. Her intentions and the veto which frustrated them are alike discernible when she says to her son Dr. Cabarrus: "I owe it to Monsieur de Chimay to endure all these slanders uncomplainingly."

Nevertheless she did succeed, as we have seen, in dictating more than one memorandum to her children, notably to her daughter Madame du Hallay, to whom Arsène Houssaye has recourse for so many of his tales of fantasy.

Theresia's last letter still exhibits that affectation of gentle, kindly resignation which she kept up till the last. Nevertheless her vanity will show itself to the detriment of the illusion in her great anxiety to have an explanatory footnote appended to some verses of which she was the subject.

"Chimay, *December 30, 1831.*

"The thoughts of you, my excellent friend, always

* Theresia's vainglorious utterances were certainly the cause of more than one misunderstanding between her and the Comte de Caraman, and we know of this from the allusion to domestic dissensions of which he speaks in this letter as a possible consequence in a case like hers.

touch my heart with sweet solace, filling it with happiness and gratitude, feelings which I above all people ought to entertain for you. Every one, my friend, would have done for you what I have had the pleasure of doing, and no one would have retained the memory of it with such constancy as you have done, nay, more—and I repeat it with all sincerity—the tokens of attachment which you shower upon me render me happy and proud.

“Your verses, which have deeply moved me, and which others will read with admiration, ennoble the name of Térésa, the name on which obloquy has so often been cast. Consecrated, blessed, and honoured by you, what has that name now to fear?

“But will it be made clear in a note that it is Térésa Chimay whom you have thus commended to posterity? You will observe, my friend, what a store I set on my title-deeds to fame.

“Please embrace Madame de Pougens most affectionately on my behalf, and be assured that nobody is more sincerely attached and devoted to you than your friend.

“PRINCESSE DE CHIMAY.

“Monsieur de Chimay and my daughter Louise desire me to offer you their best wishes for 1832.”

* * *

Diseases of the liver in those days were generally looked upon as incurable. Theresia, therefore, regarded her fate as sealed. Seeing her end approaching, her great aim, in dictating her notes to her children, was to weave a pleasing legend in order to gloss over the unattractive portions of her story.

What was the tangible result of this last vain effort of her life? The anxiety which the de Chimay family display to suppress every fresh document that is brought to light concerning la belle Tallien supplies a sufficient response to the question.

If any memorial had been sketched out, or any notes jotted down on which to rear a regular biography, they exist no more ; or if exist they do, they will never be wrung from the hands of the family.

Judging by the falsehoods, at once childish and impudent, which have been collected together by her children, *la belle Tallien's* own *Memoirs* would possess no historic value. Even, therefore, if we were certain that they had existed, there would be no reason to regret their loss.

To sum up, the last twenty years of *Theresia's* existence were largely a cruel expiation of her former folly and wrongdoing, an expiation forced on her by her blind obstinacy and morbid selfishness.

Because she did not quietly resign herself to the tranquil and unostentatious enjoyment of the happiness which she might have found in her un hoped-for alliance with the *Comte de Caraman* ; because she wished at all costs to queen it over the French or Belgian aristocracy as she had queened it over the rag-tag and bob-tail of the Revolution, she beheld the solid foundations of her happiness melt and disappear before her eyes. Husband, children, fortune, were all alike treasures which she cast aside in her frenzied pursuit of an elusive bauble. She tormented and worried herself to death, never abandoning the hope of obtaining the official recognition of the high position her charms had won her, yet seeing Time making ever deeper and deeper ravages in the beauty of her face and form, the beauty that was compelled, instead of reigning in sovereign triumph before the footlights, to linger in the inglorious obscurity of the wings.

Her figure began to lose its grace, her complexion its purity ; Time delved his parallels upon her brow ; her dark and splendid tresses were sprent with silver—and yet the hour of her triumph sounded not. Nor had

it sounded when, on January 15, 1835, at Chimay, death came to hurry her away from this earthly scene.

It may be asked whether these twenty years of shattered hopes, of baffled aims, did not wipe out for Theresia the stain of the seventeen preceding years of accumulated guilt ; but, at the risk of incurring the reproach of undue harshness, we confess we do not see how the vain and senseless repining amid which Theresia passed the concluding fifteen or twenty years of her life, can be looked upon as indicating contrition, can be regarded as an expiation.

She behaved herself decently, she performed some of her maternal duties ; but, surely, that was the minimum she owed to the Comte de Caraman. On the other hand, we see that she still clung to her ambitions and her vanity, albeit therein lay the sole source of disruption in the domestic circle at Chimay.

If to her beauty Madame Tallien had united the slightest merit of the moral order, our sympathy would have been keen to rally to her side, for one is loath to believe that a lovely casket contains nothing save what is ugly and repulsive. But physical perfection, when its sole accompaniment is the lying art of a vain and selfish courtesan, fails to inspire either affection or sympathy. Rather it repels, as do those beautiful but poisonous plants which at first attract us, but from which we flee with horror when we see that they are surrounded only by corpses.

APPENDICES

I

PORTRAITS AND HANDWRITING

IN the present volume we have reproduced four portraits of Madame Tallien on which it is necessary to offer some comment, as they fall considerably short of the charm and loveliness which tradition would have us associate with this famous enchantress. Two, at least, of these portraits are of unquestionable authenticity; they are the two drawings made by Gerard as studies for a picture, which latter may still be in the possession of the de Chimay family. The originals of these drawings are in the Musée Carnavalet. There, too, is to be seen a photograph, not a very first-rate one, of a portrait, attributed to Boilly, which, according to a written inscription on this same photograph, is said to represent Madame Tallien. It depicts a young woman seated on a stone seat with her back to a fountain. There is an undeniable likeness between this portrait and Gerard's drawings, but the style of it is much more reminiscent of Madame Vigé-Lebrun's work than of Boilly's.

The Tallien legend, as recounted by Arsène Houssaye in his "Notre Dame de Thermidor," states that the pseudo-Marquise de Fontenay had her portrait painted somewhere about 1788 or 1789 by the celebrated Madame Lebrun. Nowhere, however, does the latter allude to any such picture, nor is any mention of it made in the list of her works, from which, however, not even the slightest of her paintings is omitted. This silence regarding a woman who was so prominently before the public from 1788 onwards, and who was personally known to Madame Vigé-Lebrun (she refers to her in her *Memoirs* as one of the celebrities of the day), seems necessarily to imply that the story of Theresia's having sat

for her portrait to Madame Lebrun is without foundation. It is, nevertheless, quite within the range of possibility that one of Madame Lebrun's pupils painted the portrait under her supervision—very likely in her studio—and that such might be the origin of the portrait attributed to Boilly.

Theresia was a very well-developed girl as far back as 1787, and in 1788-89 she might quite well have resembled the figure we see in the picture in question. We have the same eyes, the same expression, the same turn of the head as are represented in Gerard's drawings. The sole difference is one of age. Apart from the relative merits of execution, the bust—shoulders, arms, and bosom—are identical in both cases and the figure equally tall. Lastly, there is the same *abandon*, the same softness of pose in the work of both artists. Moreover, the portrait attributed to Boilly exhibits that excessive smoothness which is so general a characteristic of Madame Lebrun's work, a circumstance that has suggested to us the theory that it may have been painted by one of her pupils. In arrangement, composition, and technique it also bears a closer resemblance to the Lebrun school than to Boilly's. In any case it almost certainly represents the fair Theresia at a time when she was beginning to taste the disappointments of her first marriage.

But it will doubtless be asked, How comes it that none of Madame Tallien's portraits bring back the charm, the seductiveness of this celebrated woman? There is something truly extraordinary in this defect when we consider the unanimity with which her beauty is made the theme of written encomiums. If, however, we examine the portraits, so disappointingly unalluring, we shall perceive that the lack of charm is the fault of the sitter, that it is due to her inability to pose intelligently. We are not—as in the case of Madame Récamier, for example—brought into the presence of a woman of alert and active intellect, of one whose intelligence illumines and animates her whole countenance. Rather we behold the celebrated "beauty"—the creature who, from her very childhood, had been accustomed to be the object of fulsome flattery, and who was profoundly conscious of the magnificence of her fleshly charms, and remained motionless and stolid in the pose she had been instructed to assume. Her one idea was to hold herself perfectly still, to move neither eyes nor

lips, not so much as a finger, lest the painter should lose a particle of her marvellous beauty.

When not posing for her portrait the fair Theresia must have been a very different being. She would then have been all movement, employing all her wanton's wiles, sidelong glances, oglings, smiles, lithe movements of her body. In ordinary life it must have been these "taking" ways that constituted her much-vaunted power to charm. The coolly analytical Reinhart, when he beheld her in her *salon* in the rue de Babylone, completely saw through the forced and artificial nature of her behaviour. He saw that she was an actress who would sometimes grow weary and exhausted with the unceasing exigencies of her part.

But no artist could put on canvas her constant mobility. That task is outside the domain of the portrait-painter and is only rendered possible in these modern days by the cinematograph. When sitting for her portrait, then, she remained perfectly still, as inert as a sleeping ruminant. In a word, her pose was merely bovine.

Thus, though she little dreamed it, she has revealed to posterity something of the enigma which attaches to her character, for her portraits prove that her charm was artificial, her graces studied, her affability assumed, and show that the whole of her public and a great measure of her private life was made up of make-believe and dissimulation.

A logical examination of her career unveils the secrets of her psychology, despite the legends that have been woven around her name. Finally, a scrutiny of her handwriting completes the revelation of her character and justifies an even severer verdict on the real nature of this woman on whose memory history has shed such a wealth of ill-merited renown.

The most distinguished exponent of the embryonic science of graphology who conceals his identity, all too modestly, beneath the pseudonym "Deductio" has been so good as to furnish us with the following report on Madame Tallien's handwriting :

MONSIEUR,—It is with much surprise that I view the result of my analysis of Madame Tallien's handwriting. It is indeed so greatly at variance with that celebrated woman's traditional reputation that you yourself will doubtless be no less

surprised than I. For, instead of the distinguished qualities commonly attributed to her, what do I see? The admirable creature whose praises our poets have sung was, in fact, but

Vous avez eu tant d'obligances pour mon Citoyen
 que j'envis en redonnant une nouvelle preuve à
 toute la confiance que vous m'avez - la Cit. j'ignore
 chirurgien Distingué Était préféré de l'abbé à remplir
 avec succès la place d'aide major aux invalides, il
 a été officier en chef des hôpitaux ambulants du
 nord - ces titres lui ont été obtenus du ministre de
 la marine la promesse d'une place d'inspecteur -
 la sagesse et le zèle, mais il est peu de famille et un
 retard est fâcheux en pareil cas. - Veuillez donc jeter
 soin d'appeler au ministre et d'engager aduand.
 le rapport le plutôt possible - vous m'obligerez
 infiniment -

Mon cher Citoyen L'assurance de mon estime
 et du plaisir que j'aurai à vous remercier de
 vos vœux —

Thérèse Labrousse

Ce 3 jour complémentaire L'an 66

the merest mediocrity. This the detailed and general characteristics of all the specimens you have submitted to me abundantly demonstrate.

In graphology we recognise distinction by the harmony and regularity of the style, the simple formation of the characters, and by the absence of unnecessary strokes. The plainer the

style, the more active and cultivated the mind and intelligence of the writer. Now, in the case of Madame Tallien all these characteristics are absent. Her lack of moral control is discernible in careless formation of her letters, and in the use of capitals where they are not required. Nor are these

*je vous amener avec un plaisir bien vif, que le Dictionnaire
s'est occupé avec empressement de le donner à une femme
qui n'aurait jamais dû en connaître; j'espère que vous
n'avez pas à éprouver les effets de sa sollicitude à votre
égard et qu'il ne servira que les précieux Dictionnaires
mieux, qui vous apprendront enfin un bien et que
vous n'êtes à tant de titres —*

*Adieu et respectueux
attachement*

*Thérèse Lebarbier
Tallien*

defects to be ascribed to the eagerness and ardour with which she pursued her task. So far is that from being the case that her writing is full of unnecessary strokes, fancifully formed letters, and flourishes which must have acted as hindrances to composition. They imply a straining after effect, an inordinate desire to fascinate, and a very superabundant measure of vanity.

From the care with which she closes her a's and o's and from the backward crooks with which she terminates her words, as well as from the cramped style of her writing in general, we conclude that she possessed a selfish nature.

In all the examples of her handwriting that I have seen her words and letters are of irregular height; sometimes, too, the latter are joined and sometimes not. This is an indication of

a sensitive nature, but in her case it was a sensitiveness of which she herself was the sole object.

The above-mentioned inequalities result from weakness of will, a weakness which is revealed by the manner in which Madame Tallien crosses her t's. Her strokes as a rule are long and thin. The short and thick ones are the exception and apparently accidental. Lacking the incentive of the will, she made no effort to cultivate her mind.

The capitals, with their leftward slope, in her signatures, betoken lack of culture and intelligence, and to progress in such conditions would have required strong power of will. This she did not possess, while her sensuality (betrayed by the manner in which she thickened the middle of her downstrokes) would not have been favourable to mental cultivation. All her energies were centred on her inordinate anxiety to fascinate.

The unnecessary complications which are noticeable in her writing—for example, in her crossed l's and in her wrong use of loops—are sure indications of the want of straightforwardness of character.

All these undesirable traits reveal a character quite the reverse of the lofty nature that has been attributed to Madame Tallien.

The excessive self-love, the constant desire to appear seductive and to dazzle, would scarcely have permitted her to take an interest in others, but, with the assistance of her talent for dissembling, she may have *pretended* to be compassionate and open-hearted. This no doubt explains why she has been credited with qualities which her writing certainly tends to belie, for of the latter the predominating characteristics are vanity, selfishness, hypersensitiveness, deceit, sloth, sensuality, inconstancy, heedlessness, and want of control.

Her great ambition was to appear superior to other women. She was tortured by envy, and her sensitiveness and vanity were not calculated to enable her readily to pardon an affront.

Her beauty must unquestionably have been great to have thus blinded her contemporaries to her real nature.

The facsimile letters given in this volume will enable graphologists to verify the accuracy of this estimate.

II

POLICE REPORTS

10 Messidor, Year II

ON the night of the 6th Messidor, Citoyen Tallien remained at the Jacobins' Club till the end of the sitting. He waited for the man with the heavy stick in front of the carriage entrance to a house in the rue Honoré. We noticed that he was very impatient. At length he came and they went up the rue Honoré, the rue de la Loi, past the barracks and the gallery to the right of the Maison Egalité, and sat down at the far end of the garden. They each drank a bavaroise and then went back beneath the wooden galleries, arm-in-arm and talking together very mysteriously. At eleven o'clock they crossed the palace yard and went out into the Place Egalité. Tallien's guard hailed a *fiacre*, saluted Tallien, and each called the other "friend," saying, "We shall meet again to-morrow, friend." We approached the carriage. Tallien told the driver to take him to the rue de la Perle. The other took himself off down the rue de Chartres on foot. We ran as far as the quondam Pont Royal, but as we did not succeed in getting in touch with him, we suppose that he went down an alley in which he dwells in the Section des Tuileries. Last night he had on a red-and-white jacket with broad stripes, black breeches, a waistcoat, and a round hat. We noticed that he had fair, close-cropped hair and that he was about the same build as Tallien himself.

G.*

13 Messidor, Year II

of the one and indivisible Republic

Bourdon de l'Oise went into the Convention at 12.30 P.M. on the 11th inst. and came out again at the end of the sitting; went to No. 55 rue Honoré in company with several citizens; came out two hours later and went to No. 1430 rue des Pères;

* "Paris Révolutionnaire," Lenotre, pp. 30-31.

stopped there ten minutes and then went down the street ; spoke to two young citoyens, one about fifteen, the other ten ; he then spoke to a citoyenne, a little girl, and went on to the rue du Roule, where he went into the first music-seller's you come to from the rue Honoré end. There he remained seated a couple of hours. We noticed that several other citizens went in. He came out with a citizen arm-in-arm ; they separated near the Louvre. He went to the Jardin Egalité, where he conversed with four citizens. After leaving them he joined a group of six citizens, two of them females. After talking a long time with them he left the group in company with a citizen about forty-five years of age, who had red hair and resembled one of the *ci-devant* priests. They went from one end of the same avenue to the other near the Allée des Feuillants and spoke to several citizens at different times and saluted several others. Did not leave the said citizen until nine o'clock and then walked up and down the said avenue by himself. He then went into the lavatory, came out, and sat down by a tree near the slope of the Terrasse des Feuillants, where he remained a very long time, and where the crowds of passers-by caused us to lose sight of him. It was then half-past ten.

Yesterday, the 12th inst., the same citizen left the Convention and went and sat down in the Allée des Feuillants with three other citizens. A quarter of an hour later they got up and we noticed that the others kept talking to him and that he seemed to be more excited than the others. They remained standing a long time ; then they went off down the Allée des Feuillants. Bourdon de l'Oise went along arm-in-arm with a citizen and they went into No. 55 rue Honoré. There he remained about two hours, and came out again just before half-past four ; went to No. 1430 rue des Pères, stayed ten minutes, and, coming out, went to his own house, which, so far as we saw, he did not leave again that day ; it was then nine o'clock at night.

G

14 Messidor, Year II

We should not be surprised if the Sieur Rambouillet, who was appointed to the Police by Citoyen Ta and who has just been relieved of his duties, turned out to be one of

the men whom the said deputy employs to protect him and to let him know whether he is being watched.

It is impossible to keep watch on the said deputy in his own street, because it is so short and straight. There are no places of concealment except a stone seat or two let into the wall beside the carriage entrances of some of the houses, and the moment the tenants in the said street notice any one passing up and down frequently they come to their windows or send their servants to the door, so that it is impossible for one to keep watch in the neighbourhood of his abode.

G.*

* The initial "G" denotes one Guérin, a spy of the Committee of Public Safety, which Robespierre dominated. He was therefore indirectly the spy of the Revolutionary Dictator himself.

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